

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Organisation: Parliament of NSW
Name: Mr Andrew Stoner
Position: Member for Oxley
Telephone: 02 6562 6190
Date Received: 19/08/2005

Subject:

Summary



ANDREW STONER MP

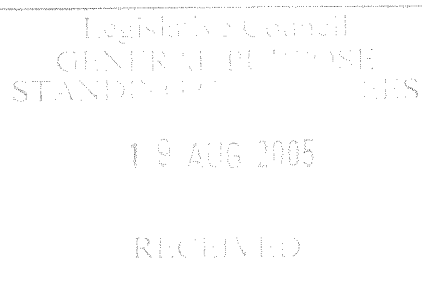
State Member for Oxley

Leader of NSW Nationals
Shadow Minister for Roads
Shadow Minister for Energy and Utilities
Shadow Minister for Ports



18 August 2005

The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC
Legislative Council General Purpose
Standing Committee No. 4
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Minister

Re: Inquiry into the Pacific Highway Upgrade.

Please find attached Submission from the Mayor of Kempsey Shire Council dated 11 August 2005 and two Private Member Statements from me dated 1 April 2004 and 23 June 2005.

Would you please accept these documents as a submission for the above inquiry?

Thanking you

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stoner MP
Member for Oxley
Leader of the Nationals
Shadow Minister for Roads

Ref 118 (299371)

APV kmm

11 August 2005

Andrew Stoner MP
State Member for Oxley
PO Box 120
WEST KEMPSEY NSW 2440

Dear Andrew

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Attached for your information is a copy of a letter to the Minister for Roads requesting that the State Government hold an inquiry into Pacific Highway Upgrades within the area Port Macquarie to Woolgoolga with similar terms of reference to that of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4.

Council resolved that Hastings, Nambucca, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour Councils be invited to support the proposal and that the members of State Parliament, Messers Rob Oakeshott, Andrew Stoner and Andrew Fraser be requested to support the proposal.

Council also requests your support for the proposal to ensure the best possible outcomes from the Pacific Highway Upgrade for the communities of the Mid North Coast.

Yours sincerely



J A Hayes
MAYOR

c.c. Rob Oakeshott
Andrew Fraser

attach.

administrationPhone 02 6562 6077
Fax 02 6562 8902**operational services**Phone 02 6562 6077
Fax 02 6562 2905**rates**Phone 02 6562 8955
Fax 02 6562 8902**environmental services**Phone 02 6562 7933
Fax 02 6562 2344**library**Phone 02 6562 6656
Fax 02 6562 8627**community services**Phone 02 6562 6077
Fax 02 6562 6141

16 AUG 2005

Ref 118 (299371)
APV kmm

11 August 2005

Hon Joseph Tripodi MP
Minister for Roads
Level 25
9 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

First let me congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Roads in the recent reshuffle. We had a very productive working relationship while you were Minister for Housing and I look forward to a similar relationship in your new portfolio.

Kempsey Shire Council has had concerns for a long time regarding the effects that the upgrading of the Pacific Highway will have on the adjacent communities. Council fully supports the general upgrading of the Pacific Highway to dual carriageways and, in particular, eagerly awaits the commencement of the upgrading of Kempsey and Eungai section, which will bypass the urban areas of Kempsey and Frederickton.

However, Council has concerns regarding the impacts that these proposed upgrades will have on communities in the Mid North Coast region. Of particular concern is the impact of interstate heavy transport on the Pacific Highway, the mixing of interstate and local transport and the forecast doubling by 2025 of the NSW freight task.

Council at its meeting on 12 July 2005 resolved:

"That the State Government be requested to hold an inquiry into Pacific Highway upgrades within the area – Port Macquarie to Woolgoolga with similar terms of reference to that of the General Purpose Standing Committee No 4.

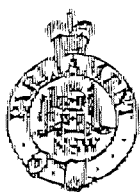
That Hastings, Nambucca, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour Councils be invited to support the proposal.

That the members of State Parliament, Messrs Rob Oakeshott, Andrew Stoner and Andrew Fraser be requested to support the proposal."

Council requests that an inquiry be held into the Pacific Highway upgrade within the area Port Macquarie to Woolgoolga with similar terms of reference to that of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4, or that the Terms of Reference of the inquiry into Pacific Highway upgrades by the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 be widened to include that section of the Pacific Highway between Port Macquarie to Woolgoolga.

Yours sincerely

J A Hayes
MAYOR



NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard

Pacific Highway Upgrade

Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Thursday 23 June 2005.

PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE

Page: 17516

Mr ANDREW STONER (Oxley—Leader of The Nationals) [5.28 p.m.]: On previous occasions in this Chamber I have expressed concern about the route chosen by the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] and the Minister for the Kempsey to Eungai section of the Pacific highway upgrade. Specifically, I have referred to the country to the east of Kempsey, which frequently floods, and to the RTA's proposal for the road to be routed through that flood plain. Tonight I want to refer to the other part of this project, known as the northern zone of the proposed upgrade. I am concerned that the RTA's preferred route in the northern zone, the route known as NW2, is significantly more expensive than the alternative route, known as NW1, and that the reasons given by the RTA are demonstrably spurious. Briefly, the NW1 route is far more direct, about 1.8 kilometres shorter than the NW2 route. However, it passes through Tamban State Forest.

On the RTA's own figures NW1 is some \$30 million less expensive than NW2, without allowing for the additional costs of private property resumptions associated with NW2. Neither does this cost differential estimate allow for higher engineering costs associated with NW2's passage through lowlands near Clybucca, which often flood. One of the reasons given by the RTA for its decision was that "significant archaeological sites" were present. However, verbal advice from the consultant archaeologist and representatives of the Kempsey Local Aboriginal Land Council indicate that there is no significant archaeological difference between routes NW1 and NW2. Another reason given by the RTA for its decision is that the section of the Tamban State Forest involved contains "a seed orchard". This is disputed by local residents, who state that this area of forest is in fact plantation forest and that seed stock is widely available.

I am further advised that a geotechnical consultant recommended the NW1 route due to the existence of favourable geology including ready access to fill, which could be used in conjunction with the upgrade. I ask why, in the face of very significant additional costs and based on the fairly flimsy and demonstrably spurious reasons given by the RTA, the Government is so insistent on proceeding with the NW2 route, which is to the east of the NW1 route that travels through the Tamban State Forest. I suspect that the very close and cosy relationship between the Labor Government and the Greens is the real reason. In fact, the Tamban State Forest has been the location of frequent protests by local greens groups who are concerned about the existence of a timber industry in that forest—even though, as I say, much of the forest is plantation forest.

I can only conclude that the Greens have an ambit claim over this section of forest, and that the Government has been instructed to ensure that the Pacific Highway upgrade does not go through the forest because the Greens want it locked up as yet another national park. We have seen this happen in this State time and again when this Premier, in the pursuit of Greens preferences, has been prepared to hand over large areas of State Forest to appease the Greens desire for these forests to be declared national parks. If that is the case in relation to the Pacific Highway upgrade, and this is the real reason for selecting the NW2 route over the NW1 route, it would involve at least \$30 million additional expenditure of taxpayer money just for a cosy deal to appease the Greens and obtain Greens preferences. I ask that this matter be thoroughly investigated by the newly appointed Minister for Roads. He must assure the community that taxpayer funds are being used wisely.



NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard

Pacific Highway Upgrade

Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Thursday 1 April 2004.

PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE

Page: 8028

Mr ANDREW STONER (Oxley—Leader of The Nationals) [5.03 p.m.]: The Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] plans to widen the Pacific Highway between Bloomfield Street and Hill Street, South Kempsey. That section of the highway carries a high volume of traffic and sometimes there is congestion in the mix of local traffic and through traffic, particularly in the transport of heavy freight between Brisbane and Sydney. That is a problematic part of the Pacific Highway and the RTA's efforts to alleviate traffic problems are generally welcome. However, local residents are very concerned about the impacts of this proposal on that section of highway, where there are nine silky oak trees of great historic significance. The trees were planted during World War II by the women of Kempsey, as a memorial to the soldiers who did not come home to the Macleay area.

The RTA proposes to remove some of the trees to enable road widening, and that has upset many Kempsey residents. The trees have been well cared for by local residents, particularly those in Lachlan Street, which runs parallel to the Pacific Highway. Recently I met with residents of Lachlan Street, including Dick Graham, Greg Mayhew and Mrs Field. They represented all the residents of the street who will be affected by the widening of the highway. The residents are of the view that the RTA's plan is of questionable benefit. They pointed out that as soon as the traffic moves past that section the road reverts to a narrow single lane, and just around the corner the Kempsey traffic bridge impacts on the volume of traffic along the Pacific Highway. The plan will do nothing to alleviate traffic flow.

On top of that there is a plan for the Pacific Highway to bypass Kempsey to the east. Again, I question whether the RTA ought to go ahead with its plan. On the other hand the plan will impact greatly on the quality of life of local residents. Already the constant stream of trucks shakes the windows of the residents in Lachlan Street. The RTA's plan will move the traffic closer to their houses, and without trees there will be more noise and more bright headlights shining into the living rooms and bedrooms. Twenty-eight driveways will be affected and residents' access will be greatly restricted. Also, there are serious safety concerns about the safety of young children, given that heavy volumes of traffic will pass by the front yards in which they play. In addition, there are concerns that the RTA's plan will impede funeral-related traffic associated with the nearby East Kempsey Cemetery.

The RTA traffic plan is of doubtful benefit in improving traffic flow, especially with the impending bypass, the numerous disadvantages to the amenity of life of local residents, and concerns about the beautiful silky oak trees that greet travellers as they near Kempsey. I have raised these concerns with the RTA and understand that the regional manager, Peter Collins, has met with local residents. However, no assurances have been forthcoming about the future of the historically significant silky oak trees. Additionally, no assurances were given about the amenity and quality of life of residents, residential access and so on. On 23 January I wrote to the Minister for Roads but have received no response, and that is why I raised this matter in the House today. The people of Kempsey are waiting for a decision to be made. They want the Government to treat their concerns seriously. At this stage they have hanging over their heads a great deal of uncertainty about their quality of life and concerns about the silky oak trees alongside the highway.