

## INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

**Organisation:**

**Name:** Mr Perry Cornish

**Telephone:**

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**Subject:**

**Summary**

Ms Jan Burnswoods,

Recently, at the public hearing of the Parliamentary Inquiry regarding the Pacific Highway upgrades, held in Ballina, you quizzed Jan Barham (Byron Council Mayor) regarding her council's desire to remove trucks from the highway. This desire was a frequently expressed sentiment at the hearing and the forum, in fact, probably expressed by every speaker. You stated that there will still be the need for large truck transport through our region, and therefore, the construction of this highway could not be avoided.

Perhaps Ms Barham should have replied to your questioning by saying that we want not just the Casino to Murwillumbah rail link reopened, but other such regional rail links opened, to supply freight to the other large towns in our district. Perhaps reopen the Ballina rail line? And another rail line going through the Woodburn and Evans Head area? These rail links can carry the large freight to these areas, off the Brisbane to Sydney line, without the need for B-Doubles to traverse our highways. The small distance transport of the freight from rail yards to retail outlets can be performed by much smaller vehicles at much slower speeds on our existing roads, both now and into the future.

Have a look at what your Qld counterpart, Andrew McNamara, is doing in Hervey Bay (Please view an interview transcript at <http://www.energybulletin.net/8501.html>). Previous Qld governments not only got rid of the rail link infrastructure, but they sold off the rail corridors as well. Now, in the interest of preparing rural areas in Qld for the onslaught of oil energy depletion, the state government has to re-establish such rail corridors. This is because they are convinced by the overwhelming evidence, that to survive peak oil production, freight transport will need to be conducted by energy efficient means, rather than the most inefficient means we have - trucks!

The majority of our community is of a similar opinion. This was clearly expressed to you at the hearing and forum. Indeed, this view is expressed loudly from communities across the entire country. What justifies the ignorance of such overwhelming public opinion by elected members? Or are there economic, social or environmental reasons that prohibit the development of rail infrastructure in comparison to road? If there are such reasons, lets have them out in public for debate.

You have been supplied with a clear description of the energy problems Australia is about to face and conclusive evidence of the superiority of rail over road transport, on economic, social and environmental grounds (see submission from Perry Cornish and Michael Namrell). The construction of a 4-6 lane highway, in a region where rail is obviously the better transport alternative, is clearly negligent on the part of our elected state members.

Yours sincerely,

Perry Cornish