

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Organisation:

Name: Mrs Louise Sheehan

Date Received: 5/07/2005

Subject:

Summary

I would like to make a submission based on the RTA's reluctance to investigate route options for a Motorway further west of the existing Pacific Highway. I live within the Wells Crossing to Harwood study area and have made a number of requests (as have other locals) to at least investigate an option which utilises the Summerland Way (inland from the Pacific Highway connecting Grafton & Casino). This would be less affected by flooding, have less social impact, less environmental impact and probably less impact on the better agricultural land. Such an option would mean that the traffic would be reduced in the already busy coastal communities and I think this would therefore be safer for motorists.

Here is an extract from an email from [redacted] from SKM (consultants working for the RTA) to my latest suggestion for an extension of the study area to include this option:

"There are a number of objectives and drivers for the project. One of these is the need to tie in with upgrade projects to the north and south. In the north, the requirement is to tie in with the Harwood/Iluka Road section, so that this project is consistent with the adjoining project to the north, ie Iluka Road to Woodburn. Any options to the west would not meet these project requirements.

Also the majority of population growth from Hexham to the Queensland border is in the coastal areas. Any consideration of routes to the west would be away from the high population areas and not cater for the regional traffic needs. Accordingly, investigations are focussed within the existing study area and particularly the area of the existing Harwood Bridge and existing highway corridor north to Iluka Road."

Another reason for this route not being investigated was supplied by [redacted] from the RTA (who has since resigned). He said the Summerland Way had a significant amount of money spent on it a few years ago and resulted in no extra traffic despite the upgrade.

Currently traffic has to negotiate the streets of Grafton and the narrow "bendy" bridge to gain access and therefore until this problem is overcome it is simply not a viable option for motorists to use the Summerland Way.

I feel a route to the west deserves at least investigation and the RTA should be looking at this project as a "whole" and not instructing their various consultancy groups to simply "link-up" with the next project. It seems that this is what is preventing the Summerland Way option from being looked at in this area. Could your Committee please investigate this option?