

**Submission
No 120**

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Organisation:

Name: Mr Dayne Mearns

Telephone:

Date Received: 22/08/2005

Subject:

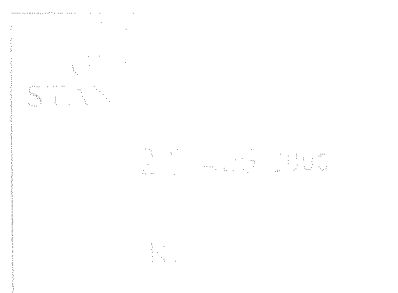
Summary

From: Jenny Gardiner
To: Steven Reynolds
Date: 19/08/05 16:34:25
Subject: Fwd: Submission to General Purpose Standing Committee 4 Highway Upgrades

11:32:34 am Friday, 19 August 2005 >>>

The Honorable Jenny Gardiner,
Please accept the attached submission regarding the upgrade of the Pacific Highway. A copy has also been faxed to 02 9230 3408.

Dayne Mearns



**SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES
TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF NSW
General Purpose Standing Committee Number 4.**

August 19, 2005

My name is Dayne Mearns. I am an architect & company director living in Tintenbar and my property is affected by the upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Tintenbar and Ewingsdale known as the project T2E. I drive between 40-50,000 kilometres per year; much of this on the Pacific Highway between Coffs Harbour and Brisbane (which is the location of my head office). I cycle regularly in the project study area.

Recently I was selected as a member of the Community Liaison Group (CLG) for the T2E project and was elected by the CLG to attend a route options workshop with the government agencies.

When I moved to the northern rivers region in the late 1970s I lived in a number of locations including Ballina, Byron Bay, Alstonville, Bangalow and Knockrow to gain an insight as to the best location to live. Eventually I determined that I wanted to live between the coast and the highway but far enough away from the highway to avoid it's adverse impacts. Prior to purchasing the property I made enquires with Ballina Shire Council and was informed that the long term plan was for the land between Ross Lane and Ballina to be eventually urban.

The property I purchased and have raised my family on has sweeping views of Lennox Head and Seven Mile Beach with the light from Byron Bay lighthouse in the distance. It is 1 kilometre from the highway with frontage to Ross Lane. The property also looks down to Sandy Flat in the south and we regularly see the flashing lights of emergency vehicles attending accidents at the Sandy Flat Road – highway intersection which is 2km distant.

Our plans to expand the original 2 bedroom house were put on hold in 1992 when the RTA announced the study for the Ballina by-pass upgrade of the highway. Following the final route selection in 1998 we proceeded to more than double the size of our residence, add a pool, renew fencing, construct cattle yards and plant trees. We understood then that we had certainty and that the Ballina bypass was to be completed by 2002 finishing at the intersection with Ross Lane. Ballina Shire Council also recognized this certainty by rezoning the area as Urban Investigation 1D as foreshadowed prior to purchase.

Following the opening of the Chinderah highway upgrade and the decision to allow B-doubles on to the Pacific Highway, we noted a very considerable impact both in terms of traffic volume and noise, particularly exhaust braking at night. As a regular night highway user I would make the following observations:

- It is rare to see police highway patrols after dark except during school holidays,

Dayne Mearns,

- There is a significant number of heavy vehicle drivers who ignore speed limits and road rules at night.

To introduce B-doubles onto known trouble spots such as the intersection of Sandy Flat Road – Pacific Highway appears to be at the least reckless and almost criminal. Reducing the speed limit in this area to 70kph is meaningless late at night. Yet recent trips along the nationally designated heavy vehicle route, the New England Highway, have shown this has become a ghost highway.

My objections to the widening of the T2E study area are as follows:

- We have made significant investment decisions following the approval of the Ballina by-pass route and it's subsequent design. If one cannot rely on the published determination of the route then what faith can be placed in any RTA decision.
- The inclusion of the coastal flats into the study area has led to the consideration of route options which are considerably more expensive in terms of construction and land acquisition. This was confirmed to me at a CLG meeting by the RTA's geotechnical engineer and the collapse of road works in dry conditions in the nearby Teven area with identical subsoil conditions demonstrate this. See today's Northern Star article attached. Our view is that the greater cost will lead to longer delays in undertaking the project with consequent additional accidents and fatalities on the existing highway. Work has not commenced on the Ballina by-pass which was due for completion 3 years ago, yet this section of highway is likely to be considerably more expensive, particularly if sited on the coastal flats.
- The proposed route through the Dufficy's Road / McLeish Road / Glenross Drive area will destroy a rural / residential community of over 20 houses within 500metres of our property which has been here for longer than we have. These are our neighbours and friends.
- The proposed route option through our property will destroy our family's heritage. We have designed and built our home in a fabulous location. I have been encouraged by my business partners to relocate to a capital city or to one of our overseas offices but have chosen to remain here. Our children's hand prints as toddlers are in our paths and we have seen trees planted as seedlings grow to maturity.
- The widening ignores the planning by Ballina Shire Council subsequent to the adoption of the Ballina by-pass route where the area has been rezoned.

In conclusion I strongly wish to express my desire to see the highway retain the approved Ballina by-pass route and remain essentially on it's current corridor between Tintenbar and Ewingsdale. Additionally, I would strongly urge that B-doubles be returned to the New England highway. This will reduce fatalities in

Dayne Mearns,

the period up to when T2E is eventually built and return the inland route the revenue it has traditionally relied upon.

Dayne Mearns

Bridge fears expressed after soil subsidence

■ From Page 1

Their long-standing concerns were highlighted after the sudden subsidence of a new section of the very busy Teven Road — near where it meets the Pacific Highway.

Bridgework has been under way on the site for the past six weeks.

As Workover investigates the incident, the main union representing workers on the site has called for all construction work to cease until safety concerns are addressed.

Ballina solicitor David Johnston yesterday said the twin bridges were a 'disaster waiting to happen'.

"It's a miracle they haven't collapsed yet," he said.

Despite the load limit on the bridges being 18 tonnes, Mr Johnston, whose property borders the bridges, said every night 60-tonne B-double semi-trailers thundered over them.

"It's absolutely frightening. The bridges sway and wobble and it must eventually destabilise them," he said.

"I would not surprise me if they were the next to collapse."

Mr Johnston is part of a community protest group which has been lobbying for improved safety of the road and bridges.

He said the community was concerned because the bridges were constructed over 100 years ago and not designed to take the volume or weight of traffic currently using them, including hundreds of cane and quarry trucks and school and passenger buses each day.

"The community is also asking if the best possible route for the Ballina bypass is still over the flood plain," he said.

Ballina Shire Council's general manager John Christopherson yesterday moved to reassure the community the ageing timber bridges were safe.

He said council engineers and consultants had spent the day on the site investigating the cause of the problem.

They had informed Workover of the dangerous incident but believed the remaining road surface and the bridges were stable and had opened the route to traffic, he said.

Council has been widening and raising the road in preparation for replacing the existing bridges with concrete ones.

On Wednesday about 1500 cubic metres of the new earthworks sank into the ground just minutes after workers had knocked off for lunch.

The area where they had been standing was sucked down into the underlying soft and unstable alluvial soil.

An eyewitness said the land 'wobbled like jelly' before cracking open and swallowing up about six metres of the newly-raised roadway.



SUBSIDENCE SCENE: David Johnston, whose property borders the bridges on Teven Road, is worried they are

Soil poses bypass challenge

"I DON'T even want to think about the possibility of changing the route," chairman of the Ballina Bypass Committee, Alan Brown, said yesterday.

"The Teven Road subsidence issue just brings home how very real the challenges of building the bypass will be."

environmental studies. It will present significant engineering challenges, including very soft soils that will need to be strengthened before a road can be built, he said.

The project will require staged construction over a number of years to

Ground is a 'sloop

WHAT kind of soil can open up and instantly swallow a huge tract of earth?

Alluvial soil common to flood plains, said Ballina Shire Council general manager John Christopherson, who has a geo-technical background and

Mr Moran, who has mapped the soils where subsidence occurred, said they were a 'sloppy glau' and had no load-bearing capacity. 'Pug soil' is a colloquial expression used.

"They are predominately water with a gel-like quality," he said.



Northern Star 19/8/05 report on collapse of road work at Teven.

Dayne Mearns,