

Submission
No 20

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES: COFFS HARBOUR

Organisation: Sapphire Convenience Store

Name: Mr Phillip Gall

Telephone:

Date Received: 4/11/2005

Subject:

Summary

SAPPHIRE CONVENIENCE STORE



Phillip & Glenda Gall

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1st November 2005

Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No 4
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE - COFFS HARBOUR TO WOOLGOOLGA.

The following issues and concerns are raised in relation to the current proposal to tear the heart out of the Northern Beaches area of Coffs Harbour with a proposal to install a major freeway/highway upgrade along the very narrow residential corridor which is developing along the Northern Beaches area.

The interaction of heavy vehicles, regional/local with seasonal holiday traffic is of concern in these areas and will ultimately lead to more horrific accidents and deaths on this section of the highway.

One accepts that the National Highway needs to be upgraded to accommodate heavy vehicles and higher traffic rates, however this does not necessarily mean the routes have to remain the same.

There is a perfect opportunity to plan for the future and to maintain the lifestyle issues that Coffs Harbour City Council and community are becoming world renown for. This lifestyle issue will be wiped out with one poor planning decision to allow a four (4) to six (6) lane highway upgrade to pass through the city outskirts and future developing areas of the northern Beaches area.

We now see development proposals being presented to Council for large scale unit developments which include 5m (15') high sound barriers. The design features and aesthetics of such constructions in the local landscape will be something to behold.

My family and I live in a two storey dwelling attached to the rear of our business, approximately sixty (60) metres off the existing highway alignment and noise, grit and grim from fuel exhaust emissions are ongoing issues.

General comments:-

Having moved to Coffs Harbour only four (4) years ago we feel that the over all proposal to look at a small bypass option to the west of the city but retaining the current highway alignment north to Woolgoolga appears to be very short sighted for the future growth of the city and northern beaches area.

Due to the physical constraints of the topography in the area, the city would appear to have three (3) potential growth corridors, being towards the south (Sawtell/Toorima), West and the northern beaches area. The options put forward would indicate that the highway will restrain and in some areas possibly restrict the future development of the western and northern growth corridors, or at the very least become a major division within the cities growth pattern.

This is assuming the purpose of the bypass is to get unnecessary through traffic away from the city and residential areas, thus reducing conflict between local/regional and interstate traffic and reduce noise and pollution impacts on residential areas.

Due to the low background noise levels within the residential areas of the city at night it will be very difficult to reduce the noise impacts on properties abutting the proposed bypass and existing alignment. Properties that overlook the proposed roadway but may be some distance off the actual road alignment can also be impacted by traffic noise at night. The design of the vehicles using the road and driving habits all contribute to the excessive noise by heavy vehicles and noisy cars.

I travel daily, Monday to Friday along the Pacific highway between Sapphire Beach and Macksville to work and can understand the need to have the road network upgraded along with more vigilant policing of drivers.

Static camera points are of little use when looking at driver behavior and saving lives, most accidents occur between these sites on bends/curves and I would hazard a guess due to driver error or excessive speed.

Majority of accidents would appear to occur due to intolerant drivers, drivers not following speed limits, drivers with poor knowledge of the road and road rules and the inability of the road network to accommodate these types of driver behavioral errors.

Examples:-

- Drivers traveling at 80kph in 100 kph speed zones causing frustration to heavy vehicle drivers and other travelers using the highway.
- Local traffic entering and leaving the highway with regional and interstate traffic traveling at 100kph. Poor judgment by drivers causes accidents. This can often be the case with short turning and merging lanes to residential areas off the highway and link road connections.
- Slow vehicles traveling in the right hand lane causing heavy vehicles and other traffic to overtake in the left hand lane.
- Number of drivers using mobile phones without hands free car kits while driving.
- Variation in speed zones along the highway can cause speeding as drivers see these zones as opportunities to overtake slower vehicles, instead of waiting for overtaking lanes on the open road sections. I personally travel through nineteen (19) variations of speed zones each day on my way to and from work with four (4) fixed speed cameras.

- The biggest deterrent for speeding is visual presents of highway patrol and unmarked police vehicles with mobile radar units.
- Driver behavior and understanding of heavy vehicle needs to accelerate down hills to maintain speed and conserve fuel when pulling up slopes on the other side of a steep gully, causes frustration to heavy vehicle drivers and often leads to situations of tail gating and potential accidents with inexperienced drivers.

Council Plans:-

Council has released a Development Control Plan for the Moonee area which will provide for further residential development to the north of Sapphire Beach area.

This adds further justification to have the Countries No. 1 highway relocated away from this residential corridor to avoid continuing traffic noise, air pollutants and local traffic conflict and accident potential from the area.

I believe that the highway upgrade issue between Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga has the potential to set the future lifestyle needs of the area and influence the way the area can and will develop. A major motorway and massive interchanges will not be attractive for future lifestyle living along the northern beaches area.

Good planning can see proper by passes of built up areas to reduce the interaction of local/regional and interstate traffic thus reducing the potential for accidents and lives to be lost.

I have included copies of submissions we have made to the Highway Community Planning Strategy Committee which highlight issues for your committee's consideration.

Yours faithfully,



Phillip Gall
Proprietor of the Sapphire Cnr. Store

Encl: Copy of submission dated 4/3/04 Community Update No 4.
Copy of submission dated 15/6/04 Community Update No 5.
Copy of submission dated 14/1/05 Preferred Options for upgrade.