

Submission  
No 43

## INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

**Organisation:**

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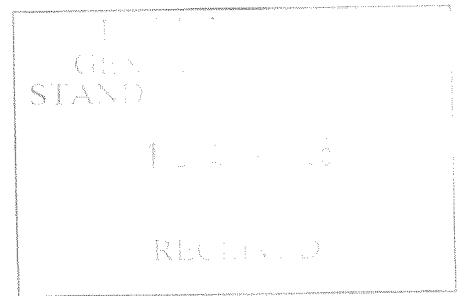
**Date Received:** 16/08/2005

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**Subject:**

**Summary**

2<sup>nd</sup> August 2005



### **SUBMISSION**

RE: Pacific Highway upgrade- Woodburn to Ballina- Section Two-routes 2C, 2D, 2E and 2F.

Please accept this as our formal summary submission by way of objection.

#### **About the Submission**

Our family, that is the Byrne family, have lived in Broadwater since the 1860s, over 140 years. We are devastated by the news of the highway upgrade, routes 2C, 2D, 2E and 2F dissecting our property, as we would be unable to recover from the dislocation it would cause. Our family have been involved for many generations with the sugar industry, being one of the first settlers to grow cane in this area. My late father returned from WWII to start a new life on the property with his wife and children. The heritage value of our family farm contributes to the area's sense of place. Over the years, our family has sustained many personal hardships and losses to keep the farm in the family, and our children have been raised to respect these sacrifices. Appendix A is a collage of some of our family historical information.

#### **Heritage**

Historically, our property was selected (under the Robertson Land Act) by my great grandfather John Byrne and his brother Dan, in the 1860's and is still, to this day, owned by our family. Dan and John Byrne were original pioneers of Broadwater being one of (if not the first) family to settle in Broadwater. They were an enterprising team and respected members of the local community, establishing a hotel, a soft drink factory, an undertakers business, and brickworks; and lobbying for community projects and development of the town. Remnants of the pioneering days can be found on the property today. John Byrne was a builder and Dan Byrne a member of the NSW Police Force (Inspector). Ours is one of the oldest cane farms in the district. Names appearing on the Broadwater mill books from commencement of the mill up until today are few, and Byrne is one of them. Copies of these records can also be found in 'Sweet Beginnings' written by Graham Smith. Furthermore, the heritage value of the quarry situated on the property is also significant, as it provided stone to build local roads and the Evans Head aerodrome. Workers camped near the quarry during WWII ensuring a continuous supply of shale. The archaeological remains provide the physical evidence of the location itself and the artefacts preserved on site provide added information. The archaeological site has important historic associations with local workmen working on the quarry during WWII.

In addition, the property has a significant place in our agricultural history; relics on our property are over 50 years old providing an irreplaceable archaeological resource. Our farm was known as a 'promotion' farm as it was the first to trial sugarcane on the river flats. Our property in its present state has enormous potential to provide information that is unavailable from other sources, thus contributing to the knowledge of our history. Heritage is important as it provides a wealth of information about the Broadwater community that lived there in the past. Yet to be discovered sites could be destroyed by this highway bypass construction.

We as members of the local community play an invaluable role in identifying and protecting heritage components. Agricultural heritage items are often poorly understood and valued; however, the expectation is that the community should do the *right thing and protect our heritage as it holds special value for future generations*. Protection of these values is important because of their contribution to the livelihood and cultural richness of future and present generations. Farm heritage items show pride for the past. And the educational value is obviously important.

As stated in the sugar milling submission, the sugar industry has made a major contribution to the region for over 120 years and the industry is an important component in the fabric of communities; the heritage significance of our property is at the **core** of this industry. And we believe that the preservation of our property is fundamental to the heritage of the Broadwater community.

The industry's preferred route anticipates the loss of some 1500 tonnes of cane or 13 hectares of productive cane land; however this route is totally unacceptable to our family as it destroys our agricultural and historical property. In addition, the Sugar Mill and the Cane Growers Association have failed to acknowledge our family's contribution to the history of the sugar cane industry in their submission, which we feel to be significant. Our family are not willing to bear the burden for the sake of neither the sugar industry, nor any other interested party and wholly reject any route through our family property.

We have received a letter from the consulting firm that someone would visit our property regarding its heritage; however, they are yet to contact us.

#### Environmental

The natural bushland to the east of the farm property has remained virtually untouched over time and we objected when the adjoining property owners applied to council to bulldoze their property and alter the ecosystems and natural watercourses that flow through our property. The environmental worth of the timbered section at the rear of our property with its blackbutt timbers has not been highlighted. In the RTA's 'Route options development report-stage 1' the natural bushland at the rear of our property has been ignored with maps not identifying its existence. This unspoiled natural bushland area of our property is extremely valued by the family as it provides ourselves, and the native wildlife with a quiet refuge.

### Noise pollution

The noise pollution from such a large development will impact upon the ambience of our daily lives destroying our quality of life.

### Water Pollution

The proposed highway upgrade will pollute the natural waterways on our family farm and affect the underground springs that are necessary during times of insufficient rain. Our drainage system will be irreversibly damaged.

### Visual pollution

Our farming property enjoys panoramic rural views. The proposed Pacific Highway upgrade will be passing through the centre of this view and will create visual pollution as far as the eye can see, totally ruining our outlook. The values of our heritage landscape lie in the significant views that it offers; therefore, a road development will potentially materially affect the views of our property.

### Flooding

Floods on our farm have been quite substantial with the 1974 flood remaining on the property for 2 weeks with heights in places of 3-4 metres. During flood times, the new highway will divert these floodwaters, back into the homes of the 500 townspeople.

### Economics -Loss of Value

Dissecting our cane farming property would render it useless, economically. The cane farming area is approximately 140 acres and in its present state, with its excellent soils, the farm has the capacity of high yields of sugar cane despite its size (mill records reflect this). As outlined in the sugar milling submission, the Byrne farm would be rendered useless and unworkable because a significant portion will be excised for the highway causing major severance of the property. It would be necessary to construct another cane pad, accounting for further loss of land for agriculture. Major drains would needed to be re-routed and major farm reshaping would need to occur together with levelling. Harvesting would be more expensive due to shorter rows.

### Conclusion

Our farming property is significant in its present form to the history of Broadwater. In the past, our commitment to the local community has been demonstrated by the donation and/or sale of sections of the property for a church, a school, widening of the present Pacific Hwy, a cycleway and most recently a bus turnaround for the safety of the local school children. This cannot continue as the viability of the property is threatened with each new acquisition. In the 1980's, I made representations to our much-respected local member regarding the Crown's intention to acquire part of our property for public land. On consideration of the information that I supplied regarding the history of the property, the proposal was withdrawn.

We object to the preferred route as proposed by the NSW Sugar Milling Co-operative, 2E to the east of Cook's Hill across the river to 2D because it must be aligned to **bypass the Byrne property**.

Our preferred route **excludes** our farming property and is similar to that forwarded by McGearry Bros (Appendix B). We believe this route does not adversely affect the NSW Sugar Milling Co-operative of which we are a member.

One of the RTA goals is minimal impact on existing communities. The health and well being of our family including the loss of family history, together with our current lifestyle and property values will be detrimentally impacted upon by the current proposals 2C, 2D, 2E and 2F.

A re-alignment of route 2E **bypassing our property** is an acceptable solution.

Peter M. Byrne

Maria S. Byrne

P.S. We strongly object to the calculation for the Byrne property on page 10 of the NSW Sugar Milling submission. We believe there is a major flaw in calculating the loss of cane production land would be 7 hectares, producing 750 tonnes. Please note that the Byrne family **do not** accept the figures supplied for our farm in the NSW sugar milling submission.