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Submission Coffs Harbour Bypass (SSI_7666)

I have visited friends in Coffs Harbour several times now, it's one of my favorite places, I'm pleased to learn you're planning on building a highway that'll not destroy the beautiful green backdrop which sets Coffs Harbour apart from the rest of the world because of this is the place where the Great Dividing Range touches to the Coast.

Noise and traffic:

I have four main concerns with noise:

The first is how RMS decided what houses should be treated and which ones should be left out. My friends main concerns with the noise study is that many of the noise measurements in the RMS study seem very high compared they actually experience.

The second concern is that some of the traffic counts are ridiculous. an increase of 600+ extra vehicles (assuming that this is referring to daily) is not what anyone would consider minor. The night-time readings for houses so far away from the existing Pacific Highway seem very high, it appears that there is a lot of nighttime noise on local roads which not what residents currently experience. This would bump up the noise reading so that the existing level is already high and therefore RMS does not have to treat these houses.

The third is that RMS seem to be treating some estates and not others. On page 56 (Volume 4A Appendix G, 4:3:1) of the EIS is a table (table 29) of DA conditions of approval which state what each developer had to do in each estate to treat each house against noise. But each condition of approval is different and how were home owners and developers supposed to know the speed of traffic on the new highway, the type of pavement, the traffic numbers (because these have not been provided and what there is, was done years ago) and in some cases, that there was going to be a major interchange near houses? The difference of designing a house that can block out road noise on a local arterial road with traffic speeds at 80kms and very low night traffic is vastly different to that of highway noise at 110kms and a significant amount of trucks during sleep hours. RMS seems to have put all the responsibility on us and Coffs Harbour City Council without providing any information..

The fourth is that the construction noise levels seem to be very high and there is no proposed treatment of houses for that noise which may go on for years. This appears grossly unfair and at no time were home owners and developers required to treat their houses for that as part of the DA.

Dangerous Goods:

I am concerned about dangerous goods vehicles possibly still driving through Coffs Harbour and I want all dangerous goods vehicles (unless they are making a delivery into Coffs Harbour) to use the bypass. The Pacific Highway upgrade at Coffs Harbour is supposed to remove all heavy vehicles out of the existing Pacific Highway which will then become a local road. The RMS information update (September 2019) that accompanied the EIS, states that the issue of Dangerous Goods has not yet been resolved but the EIS states that a risk assessment has been done. Which is it? How is it possible to put out an EIS and not deal with the serious issue of dangerous goods particularly in such a dense location as the existing highway through our town? At the tunnel in Ewingsdale at the Byron Bay turn off, the signs say that only 1 and 2:1 class of dangerous goods cannot go through. A dangerous goods risk assessment must have been completed for RMS to make any sort of decision in Coffs Harbour. Why has this important information been kept from everyone in Coffs Harbour (including Council)? Coffs Harbour residents want the same rules as applies to the Ewingsdale tunnel, applied to our tunnels, i.e. that all dangerous goods except Class 1 and Class 2.1 can use the Coffs Harbour Bypass.

Consultation:

This project is a \$1.8 billion project and will take years to complete. The consultation with the community by RMS has been woeful. For years they asked us what we wanted and we agreed it was to be tunnels, then without any consultation they came out with a completely different design with no tunnels which we rejected and now we've had six weeks with school holidays in the middle of this, to comment on a 3000-page EIS. The display booths RMS have set up are away from where the affected residents are and nobody is going there. Why haven't RMS come into the different estates and areas of Coffs Harbour to have meetings with the community and talk about these impacts?

Biodiversity:

The Coffs Harbour Bypass route is unique along the Eastern Seaboard because this is where the Great Dividing Range meets the Coast. This is why flora and fauna abounds to make Coffs Harbour a biodiversity hotspot. I'm pleased common sense has prevailed and we now have tunnels, a lower gradeline and quiet open cut asphalt. Please make sure when Bypass is being built, that only local native species are used during Urban Design activities to ensure the least amount of damage and disturbance to the beautiful flora and fauna is achieved.

Yours sincerely Thank you for the opportunity to comment

Regards

Bernie Stibbard.