



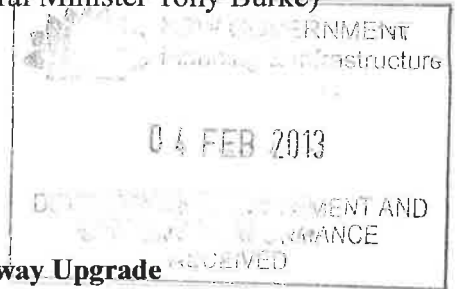
Wildlife Tourism Australia Inc.  
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22/1/13  
(copy to Federal Minister Tony Burke)

Major Projects Assessments, Department of Planning and Infrastructure,  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Submission on Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade**



WTA Inc. is concerned about the planned upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Woolgoolga and Ballina., especially the route through the Clarence Valley from Glenugie to Maclean.

Emus are still common in the outback but far less so along the east coast, having disappeared from most coastal habitats where they were once important seed dispersers, and there are nowadays very few areas where tourists can see this Australian icon in its natural habitat so close to population centres and tourism venues. I have personally noticed it is already more difficult to find emus along this stretch than it used to be, to the disappointment of international visitors, and this is borne out by conversation with some of the locals. Further impact on the population and their habitats and the possible complete loss of opportunity for residents and visitors to view these giant birds in the region would be a great pity.

In addition to emus, the region has a surprising biodiversity, including many threatened species and several threatened ecosystems. The protection of compensatory habitat elsewhere will not ensure their survival, as has been demonstrated in other areas where offset vegetation communities are not occupied by species of concern from the impacted areas, and whatever offsets we are provided with we will still lose wild habitats and ecosystems that can never be truly replaced, which is tragic for both biodiversity and the ever-growing numbers of people wanting a connection with nature and a chance to celebrate the world's wonderful natural diversity .

WTA therefore requests the determining authorities to reject the route through native habitats in the Clarence Valley and to adopt the alternative which has far less impact on the Valley's ecosystems.

From our vice-chair, Denise Goodfellow:

"Wildlife tourism like cultural tourism tends to die by increment. But the loss of each element no matter how small decreases the amount of attraction an area holds, and therefore affects diversity of product. It's a bit like losing one's finger and having others say that it doesn't matter – you've got nine more. But the point comes when you've lost a few fingers that your hand loses function."

Yours sincerely

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