

All of this is at an increased cost to local, State and Federal governments, which at some point is an increased cost to the community eg property value decreases, increased rates, flood levy, increased insurance, and less money for other projects.

I note that in Grafton, the levee to protect the town will need to be increased by 50 mm to address the increased height of water as a result of the proposed 2<sup>nd</sup> bridge pilons. If these impacts are acknowledged for Grafton surely the number of bridges between Woodburn and Wardell must be considered as a barrier to water movement.

The Roads and Maritime Service apparently say these impacts are acceptable. I say they are not. All effort must be made at the planning stages to ensure the impacts of flooding are not worse in any way as a result of the Highway Upgrade. We do not want avoidable flood-related impacts to be experienced in the Richmond River and surrounds due to poor government planning.

I believe there is an alternative, and that is the Flood Free Route proposed by the Woodburn to Ballina Community Liaison Group. The Flood Free Route was prepared and supported by 25 members of the Community Liaison Group. Mr Paul Forward ex-Chief Executive of the RTA told the General Purpose Standing Committee (December 2005) "If we are after a proper consideration of what is the most viable route for the Highway, I think we owe it to those community members who requested we look at the broader footprint that we should go about and do that." These members represented people from the local community. The RTA did investigate a flood free route but it was an independent proposal and not the option proposed by the group. The RMS did not investigate this Flood Free route.

Should you require further information, or verification of information provided in this submission please contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

*J. Matthes*  
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