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SUBMISSION TO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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

To whom it may concern,

Submission on Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade

I wish to comment on the recently released Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Woolgoolga and Ballina. In particular I have serious concerns about the route through the Clarence Valley from Glenugie to Maclean.

My concerns are based on the potential impact on threatened species and ecosystems generally along the route. In particular, the likely impact on the Coastal Emu is of grave concern. In the almost six years that I have resided in the area I have seen only three of these iconic birds on or near my property. I have also observed the steady decline in numbers of this population throughout the region since I first became aware of it in the 1970s. With such a small population any disturbance to its habitat should be avoided. The proposed bridges and other methods to address this issue are all unproven. I fear that should such methods fail, this population will further decline to the point where recovery may be impossible.

I also have grave concerns about the impact on significant numbers of other already threatened species and all of the (presently) non-threatened species that will lose their habitat when the forests are cleared for the highway. I have observed only very small numbers of Jabirus (Black-necked storks), Brolgas, Wedge-tailed Eagles and many more birds in particular. As mentioned above, I fear that the provision of compensatory habitat elsewhere will not assist these habitats and species.

At a time of great biodiversity loss we cannot allow such a major impact on the Clarence ecosystems. There is a viable alternative and I as a local Farmer and Grazier and a person of conservative nature strongly support its adoption. Whichever option we choose there will be a price to pay in terms of financial, social and environmental impacts. I implore you to consider how our grandchildren will view us in the light of the decisions we make and the actions we take today.

I hereby call on the determining authorities to reject the preferred route throughout the Clarence Valley and to adopt the orange option which is a much less damaging option for the Valley's fragile ecosystems.

Yours faithfully
(Peter Lake)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter', on a light grey rectangular background.