

File SF2012/009476/2

Danielle Holland  
Email: cpdrive@hotmail.com

Dear Danielle,

**Pacific Highway – Blackadder Creek road safety improvements**

Reference is made to your email of 7 December 2012, seeking information and clarification on aspects of the Blackadder Safety Works project. I apologise for the delay in formally responding to your specific concerns.

It appears from your email that you raise a number of concerns. These appear to relate to "*why residents were inundated with a wall of water which has been likened to a tsunami*", the extent and form of community consultation that has occurred, the magnitude of the flooding event of 26 January 2012, the perceived impact of the new road design on the properties of Corindi Park Drive residents and the aims of the road upgrade project.

With respect to the 'wall of water' it would appear that this is attributable to the unusual rain event that occurred on 26 January 2012. The flood modelling shows a 'front' to the water flow as it breaks the banks of the Corindi River and there was evidence of bank erosion at the rear of one property. This area is relatively flat and the release of water would have likely been in accord with the rapid rate of rise within the adjacent river.

With regard to the extent and form of community consultation that has occurred, it is worth noting that RMS has held numerous meetings, including one-on-one interviews with residents over the last twelve months. Several public meetings, including the SMEC meeting, have gathered information from the community and provided a forum to discuss concerns.

The purpose of the March 2012 meeting between SMEC and Corindi Park Drive residents was to provide an initial introduction, to provide residents with an opportunity to voice concerns, provide photos/videos and explanations of their experience during the January flood event, and to allow SMEC to explain their methodology moving forward.

With respect to the magnitude of the flooding event of 26 January and the belief held by Corindi Park Drive residents that the new road design has changed the course of water flow to the detriment of their properties it appears that this conclusion is not supported by the findings of the SMEC report. Much investigation has been

undertaken including additional ground surveys involving the stream bed of Corindi River and Blackadder Creek areas. These were to provide more accurate data for the flood study. Additional survey data was sourced from the Pacific Highway Upgrade project between Woolgoolga and Wells Crossing. Moreover, some of the terrain modelling was based on aerial photography methods that require isolated ground validation survey.

With respect to the January 26 event being the biggest flood event since the 1940s, RMS received information from long term residents that suggested the flood in 2012 was the worst since the 1940s flood.

The storm that occurred on 26 January 2012 was estimated to be at least a one in 50 year storm and possibly close to a one in 100 year storm for the catchment. While no two floods act in the same way, for floods of this magnitude, it is likely that large areas of the flood plains associated with the Corindi River, Blackadder Creek and Cassons Creek will be inundated, even without the recent road works. In addition to the actual height of water, issues such as rate of rise, health of vegetation, work undertaken by landowners to drain their property, etc all affect what happens on a local scale.

Finally, with regard to the aims of the road upgrade project, it should be noted that the safety works were developed under the Pacific Highway Safety and Minor Works Package. The program has two major objectives: to improve road safety performance and to reduce traffic delays associated with closures during rain events in the local catchment. RMS considers that these objectives have been achieved.

RMS advertised road levels as part of the project development, held discussions with adjoining land owners about possible impacts and is continuing to liaise with residents upstream.

It is hoped that the information provided can be of assistance to you in clarifying the issues and concerns raised in your correspondence.

Yours faithfully



**John Alexander**  
**A/Regional Manager**  
**Northern Region**

21 February 2013