

## **SUBMISSION TO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

25/1/13

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**

Having attended the public meeting in Grafton on August 31<sup>st</sup> 2012, and hearing that the social and economic costs were put ahead of the environmental costs, I have been keenly awaiting the EIS report. Unfortunately this supports my fears that it would be impossible to mitigate or ameliorate all the environmental impacts which the current proposed Pacific highway alignment from Glenugie to McLean will cause. The bottom line as I understood it from the meeting given was that the new proposal would be 9 km shorter and therefore considerably cheaper, particularly as it would involve less bridges across flood plains and therefore less cost to the tax payer.

It seems from the EIS statement that the cost of purchasing land with 'like for like' vegetation of equivalent environmental status with the same endangered flora and fauna habitat and species is not only impossible to find, but even if it were has not been factored into the cost of the proposed pink route. Added costs such as alternative over passes for the critically endangered coastal emu if the proposed underpasses are ineffective, have also not been factored in.

If all the real environmental mitigation and offset costs were factored in the true difference between the costs of the two proposed routes would be much smaller.

Apart from this we have an obligation not only to all Australians but to global citizens to preserve whatever environmental fauna and flora and their associated habitat that we have left. None more so than the 6 Threatened Ecological Communities and the one Critically Endangered Ecological Community as listed in the recently released EIS report.

As a Landcare Coordinator on the North Coast I am also acutely aware of the residual impact of the spread of weeds that the highway will bring to this most precious resource; our last remaining, fragile and most biodiverse region of Australia. The added costs involved with the offset strategy alone of weed removal for the for-seeable future, will be quite significant.

As a keen birdwatcher I am also very concerned about the ability of the coastal emu to successfully use (flood mitigated) underpasses. Although not enough scientific studies have been done, I am fearful that we will find out the hardway, with irreplaceable coastal emu deaths on the highway, and the inevitable consequence of the loss of yet another species. The only way to avoid this happening for certain is to not use the pink route, and use the orange route instead.

So as a very concerned North coast citizen, birdwatcher and Landcare Coordinator I am urging you to adopt the orange route and so conserve the most biodiverse region in Australia.

Yours sincerely  
Rose Treilibs

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