

## **A Submission to Maitland Council and the NSW Roads and Maritime Services**

### **RE: Road usage and speed zoning of the regional roads known as Belmore Road Lorn and Paterson Road, Bolwarra, NSW**

#### **Preamble**

As residents of Bolwarra we have been concerned about the current traffic usage of Belmore Rd, Lorn, and Paterson Rd, Bolwarra, NSW over the past 2 years.

More recently Daracon Quarries has submitted an application to significantly expand their activities at the Martin's Creek Quarry. We believe the proposed expansion of the quarry will significantly exacerbate the current safety and environmental impact that traffic usage on Belmore and Paterson Roads is having on the communities of Lorn and Bolwarra.

It is our understanding that Belmore Rd, Lorn, and Paterson Rd, Bolwarra, are currently designated part of a 'Regional' Road (Gazetted number 101)<sup>1</sup> that falls under the responsibility of Maitland Council and NSW Roads and Maritime Services. Therefore, this submission is directed to both of these organisations.

This submission identifies our current concerns about safety and the environmental impact of traffic usage of Belmore and Paterson Roads and requests that a review of the current traffic usage and designated speed zones be undertaken to effect a reduction of the current risk of an accident and the impact that traffic using Belmore and Paterson Roads has on the people of Lorn and Bolwarra.

We respectfully make recommendations as to how these matters could be addressed.

In considering this submission please see attached submission to the NSW Department of Planning concerning the proposed expansion of the Martin's Creek Quarry which contains additional relevant information not presented here.

#### **Road Conditions and Circumstance**

The current usage of Belmore Rd and Paterson Rd allows direct vehicle access to the residences and businesses of Lorn and Bolwarra and a transit route for traffic travelling to communities beyond Lorn and Bolwarra. The impact of the development and expansion of residential and business communities beyond Lorn and Bolwarra was recognised with the building of the 'Third Hunter River Crossing' via Flat road to facilitate the movement of traffic to and from these other developing communities. This new route was intended to reduce the traffic load on the Belmore Rd Bridge crossing of the Hunter River and to reduce congestion on Belmore Rd at its junction with High St, Maitland.

Traffic coursing along Belmore and Paterson Roads includes light and heavy vehicle traffic. Traffic regulations on Belmore Rd, Lorn, include a 50km/hr speed limit and a reduced speed limit to 40km/hr during school hours. These speed designations are in place to facilitate the safety of people using the residential properties, business properties and a local School that front onto Belmore Road in Lorn while allowing passage of vehicles. On leaving the built-up area of Lorn when traveling toward Bolwarra along Belmore Road the 50km/hr maximum speed limit

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<sup>1</sup> Schedule of Classified Roads and Unclassified Roads, NSW Roads and Maritime Services, January 2014.

remains in place for some 800m as Belmore Rd traverses an area of open flood plane countryside. Midway along the open flood planes the designated maximum speed then changes to 60km/hr.

In spite of the presence of residential buildings, a day-care centre, café and other small businesses fronting onto what becomes Paterson Rd (at the corner of Belmore Rd and Westbourne Rd), Bolwarra, the speed limit remains 60km/hr along Paterson Rd all the way to Bolwarra Heights and beyond (see Appendix 1).

Paterson Rd is marked by white double unbroken dividing lines for most of its length through the community of Bolwarra. Some 500 meters on the Lorn side of the junction of Belmore Rd and Westbourne Rd (i.e. start of Paterson Rd) there is a significant dip in the road that obscures the traffic traveling from Lorn along Belmore road toward Bolwarra so that i) vehicles driving from Bolwarra along Paterson Rd toward Lorn cannot see if there is oncoming vehicles which is particularly dangerous when traffic veers and crossed over the dividing line, ii) traffic on Paterson Rd slowing to enter properties fronting on to Paterson Rd can not be seen by the traffic in the dip travelling toward Bolwarra from Lorn and iii) vehicles exiting from residences fronting onto Paterson Road are unable to see if there is traffic approaching along Paterson Rd, from Lorn, as the vehicles are not visible when in the dip referred to above. These circumstances have lead to near miss head-on incidents and re-ended incidents and accidents involving vehicles crossing or veering over traffic dividing lines and or traveling too fast for their available line of sight. This situation is further exacerbated when there are vehicles stopped in preparation for and or turning from Westbourne Rd on to Paterson Rd. Additional circumstances such as vehicles stopping and or turning into the Day-care centre or other businesses and residences along this stretch of Paterson Rd in Bolwarra further complicates the safe movement of traffic and increases the risks of an accident or injury.

Paterson Rd bends to the right on the Lorn side of its course toward the Bolwarra Roundabout (junction of Paterson and Flat Roads). A warning sign indicating an advisory speed of 45km/hr (down from 60km/hr) is posted on the approach to the bend for traffic traveling from the Lorn direction (Appendix 1). An advisory sign is also posted and visible when traveling in the opposite direction through Bolwarra from the Bolwarra Roundabout toward Lorn (see Appendix 1). This sign indicates a further blind spot where there are several hidden driveways with traffic entering or exiting Paterson Rd. There is also a designated on-road bicycle lane coursing along the length of Paterson Rd that together with roadside parked vehicles adds to the circumstances confronting traffic using Paterson Rd.

### **Traffic Usage**

Belmore and Paterson Roads are not only used by the local community driving light (<4.5tonne) motor vehicles and/or using recreational vehicles such as bicycles to access residencies, a school, day-care centre and small businesses located in Lorn or Bolwarra but there is considerable flow of heavy (>4.5 tonne) vehicles. These vehicles include heavy haulage vehicles transporting livestock, agricultural products, machinery, fuel, and excavated (quarry) materials. They are no doubt transiting to elsewhere outside the communities of Lorn and Bolwarra since these communities are predominately residential with some community services such as schools, day-care centres, shops and other small businesses that normally do not take delivery of these items and or products via heavy vehicles.

The heavy vehicle traffic currently using Belmore and Paterson Roads often involves double-bogie vehicles. The transit of heavy vehicles significantly reduces the safety of other users and adversely impact on the wellbeing of people living and commuting on and around Belmore and Paterson Roads. In particular, heavy vehicles, whether laden or not, increase the risk of an accident and injury occurring because their size obscures vision and their speed and mass make it difficult for them to avert impact with people and or property (including street-side parked vehicles) when an incident or situation arises. Such an incident could be catastrophic for all involved.

Furthermore, the diesel fumes and noise arising from these heavy vehicles has direct impact on the environment and health and well being of the residents, and others who use the school and day-care centres and other small businesses fronting onto these roads. For the residents fronting onto Belmore and Paterson Roads there is the added impact of lack of sleep arising from the noise generated by these vehicles as early as 4:30 am and the impact that their vibration is having on properties designated by Maitland Council as having heritage value to the community and consequent cost to the property owners to repair this damage.

In regard to the heavy vehicle traffic associated with the Martin's Creek Quarry the drivers of heavy vehicles needing to access the New England Highway, at or near Maitland, may transit to and from the Quarry via either Paterson and Belmore Roads or alternatively via Flat Rd, Bolwarra, and Melbourne St, East Maitland. We understand that Daracon Quarries has directed it's drivers to use the Third Hunter River Crossing (Flat Rd/Melbourne St East Maitland) route as this avoids their trucks transiting through the small predominately residential community of Lorn and the Bolwarra community. However, not all heavy vehicles that transit through Lorn or Bolwarra are under the control of Daracon Quarries or follow this advice. Indeed many trucks traveling to and from the Quarry are contractors without motive to use a particular route other than maximise their cartage and thus business opportunity. Clearly this situation and the adverse impact of heavy traffic will get worse if the expansion and extension of operation hours of the Martin's Creek Quarry is approved.

## **Summary**

There are, in our view, no reasons why traffic using Paterson Rd, Bolwarra, should travel at speeds of greater than 50km/hr when passing the residences, day-care centre, café and small businesses located between the corner of Westbourne Rd and Paterson Rd and the Bolwarra Roundabout. Indeed we believe we have identified a number of important safety and environmental reasons why the current designated speed should be reduced.

With the opening of the Third Hunter River Crossing and its capacity to take transiting heavy traffic away from a built up community and heritage recognised buildings in the communities of Lorn and Bolwarra it is entirely unnecessary and indeed inappropriate for heavy vehicles to continue to transit through Lorn and Bolwarra.

## **Recommendation**

- 1) That the currently designated maximum road speeds and location of road use signage including (speed and advisory signs) posted on Belmore Road (from the corner of Belmore Rd and Glenarvon Rd) and Paterson Rd up to and including the Bolwarra Roundabout be reviewed.

- 2) That the maximum vehicle speed on Belmore Rd (starting at a point 250m on the Lorn side of the corner of Westbourne and Paterson Rd) and Paterson Rd (up to and including at least 50m on the Bolwarra Heights side of the Bolwarra Round-about) be reduced to 50km/hr. (see appendix 2).
- 3) That solar powered speed monitoring and reporting sign be install i) at a point 250m on the Lorn side of the corner of Westbourne and Paterson Rd in respect of traffic traveling to Bolwarra from Lorn.
- 4) That 'no parking' zones be designated on both sides of Paterson Rd for 150m either side of the corner of Paterson Rd and Westbourne Rd, Bolwarra.
- 5) That, with the exception of existing community service vehicles such as garbage trucks and bus services, Belmore Rd and Paterson Rd (extending from the corner of Belmore Rd and High Street Maitland through to the Bolwarra Roundabout) be designated light (<4.5 tonne) traffic only. See Appendix 3

Appendix 1 - Current speed limits - Nov 2016



Appendix 2 - Recommended speed limits



Appendix 3 - Recommended Light Traffic Only Roadway

