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SUBMISSION COFFS HARBOUR HIGHWAY BYPASS (SS1_7666)

The following is a list of my concerns regarding RMS's Coffs Harbour Highway Bypass Environmental Impact Statement September 2019.

1. Noise and traffic:

There are four main issues with noise:

The first is how RMS arrived at what houses should be treated and which ones should be left out. As residents, our main concern with the noise study is that many of the noise measurements in the RMS study seem very different from what we as residents actually experience.

The second concern is that some of the traffic counts are ridiculous and out of date. The night-time readings for houses away from the existing Pacific Highway seem very high and as we read this, it appears that there is a lot of nighttime noise on local roads which is contrary to what is the norm. This would bump up the noise reading so that the existing level is already high and therefore RMS does not have to treat these houses.

The third is that RMS seem to be treating some estates and not others. On page 56 (Volume 4A Appendix G, 4:3:1) of the EIS is a table (table 29) of DA conditions of approval which state what each developer had to do in each estate to treat each house against noise. **But each condition of approval is different and how were home owners and developers supposed to know the speed of traffic on the new highway, the type of pavements, the traffic numbers (because these have not been provided and what there is was done years ago) and in some cases, that there was going to be a major interchange near houses?** The difference of designing a house that can block out road noise on a local arterial road with traffic speeds at 80kms and very low night traffic is vastly different to that of highway noise at 110kms and a significant amount of trucks during sleep hours. RMS seems to have put all the responsibility on us and Coffs Harbour City Council without providing any information at all.

The fourth is that the construction noise levels seem to be very high and there is no proposed treatment of houses for that noise which may go on for years. This

appears grossly unfair and at no time were homeowners and developers required to treat their houses for that as part of the DA. Noise abatement works for all affected houses and business premises should be carried out and completed before any construction work commences on the bypass.

In relation to traffic and pollution other than noise, the recent (and indeed ongoing) issues with bushfire and other smoke remaining within the North Boambee Valley and Coffs Harbour “amphitheatre” for hours and indeed days on end demonstrate in an emphatic way that the dust from construction and emissions from all traffic will not clear quickly and may adversely affect air quality beyond that which any decent person might consider reasonable.

The Coramba Road interchange should be deleted! If indeed the “Bypass” is meant to be a bypass for Coffs Harbour and not merely another deviation from the existing Pacific Highway then another method of feeding more traffic onto an internal town road not designed or modified to the same standard as the existing Highway as it enters and leaves Coffs Harbour will create traffic congestion for road users and chaos for those resident living along the Coramba Road corridor and its offshoots.

2. Dangerous Goods:

The Pacific Highway upgrade at Coffs Harbour is supposed to remove all heavy vehicles out of the existing Pacific Highway which will then become a local road. The RMS information update (September 2019) that accompanied the EIS, states that the issue of Dangerous Goods has not yet been resolved but the EIS states that a risk assessment has been done. Which is it? How is it possible to put out an EIS and not deal with the serious issue of dangerous goods particularly in such a dense location as the existing highway through our town? At the tunnel in Ewingsdale at the Byron Bay turn off, the signs say that only 1 and 2:1 class of dangerous goods cannot go through. A dangerous goods risk assessment must have been completed for RMS to make any sort of decision in Coffs Harbour. Why has this important information been kept from everyone in Coffs Harbour (including Council)? Coffs Harbour residents want the same rules as applies to the Ewingsdale tunnel, applied to our tunnels, i.e. that all dangerous goods except Class 1 and Class 2.1 can use the Coffs Harbour Bypass.

Having said this, I note that the RMS have indicated that approximately 20 or so heavy vehicle movements per day carry dangerous goods (some of which are destined for Coffs Harbour).

3. Consultation:

This project is a \$1.8billion project and will take years to complete. The consultation with the community by RMS has been woeful. For years they asked us what we wanted and we agreed it was to be tunnels, then without any consultation they came out with a completely different design with no tunnels which we rejected and now we’ve had six weeks with school holidays in the middle of this, to comment on a circa 4000-page EIS. The display booths RMS have set up are away from where the affected residents are, and nobody is going there. Why haven’t RMS come into the different estates and areas of Coffs Harbour to have meetings with the community and talk about these impacts?

Now that tunnels are agreed to be the best way to proceed with the "Bypass" I note that early this year Mr. Elon Musk offered to build a transport tunnel under the Blue Mountains 50 kilometers long from Penrith to Lithgow for approximately \$15million per kilometer. I also note that this offer has been rejected out of hand by the powers that be. Perhaps Mr. Musk might have been asked to prove his tunneling ability by digging a tunnel slightly longer than 8 kilometers from near Englands Road in a straight line to just past Bruxner Park Road at hopefully \$15 million per kilometer. Such an "underpass" even at 80kph would be quicker than 14 Kilometers at 110kph with less emissions and noise of all kinds. It would be out of sight and give peace of mind. Even if the cost was claimed by the RMS to exceed their current preferred option, I would submit that this would be irrelevant given the history of cost overruns on RMS major projects, e.g. the Hunter expressway was the \$222 million option in its EIS in 1995 but when that expressway was opened in early 2014 the signs on the roadside proclaimed that it cost \$1.7 billion (a blowout of something like 750% albeit over 19 years, nobody I know had a wage increase anywhere near that percentage over that time. Not even fuel went up by more than a fraction of that).

4. Biodiversity:

The Coffs Harbour Bypass route is unique along the Eastern Seaboard because this is where the Great Dividing Range meets the Coast. This is why flora and fauna abound to make Coffs Harbour a biodiversity hotspot. I'm pleased common sense has prevailed and we now have tunnels but one tunnel under the town would be even better, a lower gradeline and quiet open cut asphalt. Please make sure the Bypass is being built that only local native species is used during revegetation activities to ensure the least disturbance to our flora a fauna is achieved. No noxious weeds and trees such as Lantana please.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

John T. OUTRAM

Declaration: I have made no (or insert which applies) political donations in the past two years.