

MARINA ROCKETT – SUBMISSION:

25th October 2019

My first comment is that this "bypass" is not a true bypass of Coffs Harbour but a ring road or CBD deviation which will now affect thousands of the Coffs Harbour community who currently enjoy a tranquil lifestyle and turn it into a noise and pollution nightmare. I have heard the comment "It (the bypass) should have gone further west" over and over again during the past 12 months when talking to people from all walks of life, both in my personal sphere and as a member of the Coffs Bypass Action Group Steering Committee.

The community and Council fought long and hard when the original route was adopted by the then RTA but were ignored. This section of the highway was always going to be the most expensive due to the terrain and unfortunately the \$\$\$'s were more important than the Coffs communities well being. We are now making the best of the bad option.

TRANSPARENCY AND CONSULTATION

During the past 12 months since I have been involved personally and as a member of the Steering Committee of the Coffs Bypass Action Group, it has become apparent that RMS had a policy of not cooperating with the community concerns by making it difficult to access reports and information (on noise in particular) and it took extensive research to find any information about the project.

This includes the missing 3D tiles which showed the cuttings at the 1st community viewing in September 2018 which disappeared from the 2nd viewing. Despite repeated requests from myself to RMS staff (and including then Director John Alexander) to see the tiles "no one knows where they are" was the answer. I had been told \$120,000 had been spent on making the tiles, so what did happen to them? This was after the community was expecting tunnels and the September 2018 Concept design viewings were the first we had heard we were getting cuttings. Tunnels were not reconsidered until January 2019 prior to the State election.

6 weeks (with school holidays in the middle) is barely enough time to review a 4000 plus page EIS.

TUNNELS:

I welcome the reinstatement of the 3 tunnels as cuttings would have been a disaster from the noise and visual impacts as well as the environmental effects. Coffs Harbour is the only place on the eastern seaboard where the Great Dividing Range meets the sea and as such, deserves the best we can get. The promise of open grade asphalt is also non negotiable and is very welcome. A lesson learnt from other areas where its use would have helped with ongoing noise issues.

NOISE AND VIBRATION:

Topography: I do not believe the topography of West Coffs has been taken into consideration enough. West Coffs is not a nice flat area. There are many high ridges which, though 1 to 2 klm from the route, overlook where the new motorway will be. These very

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high properties (including mine where I can see glimpse of the ocean from the front and the hills from the rear) will feel the amplified effects of noise in particular, going round in a huge semi circle as vehicles travel around the basin constrained by the mountains from Roberts Hill to at least past the Shephard's Lane tunnel. The RMS noise modelling does not take these properties into consideration at all. **More noise modelling needs to be done in these areas prior to construction.**

Also, the noise demonstration model at the RMS office in Park Ave is not a true indication of noise levels as the main noise I heard was birds tweeting constantly!

I believe **vibration** during construction will also have a big detrimental effect on these high properties and fear subsidence in many places.

As there are still many areas where the highway has been completed from Valla to Woolgoolga where the residents are still complaining about the new highway noise years after completion, it is obvious the methods RMS has used previously are ineffective and need reassessing. I would like an **independent noise assessment be done by DPE prior to any construction commencing**, to verify that measurements taken by RMS pre construction are accurate. The findings of any independent assessment should be a condition of approval that RMS (Transport Department) has to comply with.

The assessment should be broadened further than 600m due to the West Coffs topography.

The findings from any independent reports apart from RMS should be made available to the Coffs community as soon as the results are known. This would give some measure of confidence in what to expect regarding noise issues.

The Road Noise Policy 2011 should be upgraded to reflect the RMS Noise Mitigation Guideline 2015 Section 3 - Policy principles 5. Incidental benefits from the noise mitigation designed for qualifying receivers should be recognised at all receivers within a community where noise levels exceed WHO guidelines. Note: WHO Guidelines for Community Noise (1999) for outdoor areas and the WHO Night Noise Guidelines for Europe (2009) threshold levels are façade noise levels of 50dBA day and 45 dBA at night. Why write a later guideline when it is not enforceable?

SPEED LIMIT:

As the new route is very close to many residential communities, if the speed limit was lowered from 110 to 80 or 90kph, that would make a huge difference in noise levels. There are plenty of precedence where lower limits apply on motorways in residential areas and the difference in time savings would barely be 1 to 2 minutes. Much better than going through 12 sets of traffic lights.

CORAMBA INTERCHANGE:

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This interchange needs to be redesigned to lower its footprint and give noise relief to close by residents. A donut design would provide a better alternative for the residents close by.

I have been informed that there could be up to 600 extra vehicles per day using the interchange and a great percentage of these would be accessing the CBD or Park Beach Plaza. If going to the CBD, the current road into West High Street is already congested at peak times and completely unsuitable in its current high low section for extra vehicles. If going to the Plaza, extra traffic on Shephards/Don Patterson/McKays and Bray Street would also cause problems with Schools, Hospital and the already impossible intersection at the corner of Bray Street and the Pacific Highway.

It is imperative that the road from the Coramba Interchange to the Shephards Lane roundabout be upgraded to handle extra traffic, and the Shephards Lane roundabout also redesigned as it is already confusing to negotiate.

ROSELANDS ESTATE:

This estate is where the local community is most concerned as regards noise. Roselands Estate is not mentioned in the EIS although it would have to be the closest to both the Coramba Interchange and the bypass route. Consideration **MUST** be given to this community for pre and post construction noise remediation treatment.

The Roselands Estate community has a letter from RMS in Coffs from early July stating that they would look to arrange a meeting with residents when the EIS is released but to date nothing has been heard from RMS.

ALL residences that have increased noise levels of 12db or should be eligible for noise remediation post construction regardless of how far from the route.

KORARA INTERCHANGE:

The **Korora Interchange** also needs redesigning as the Action Group has been contacted by a member who speaks for 40 residents who has had no response to issues from the RMS to date.

I have heard it described as the “spaghetti” interchange.

DANGEROUS GOODS:

If dangerous goods are considered to be a reason why tunnels cannot be built, it should follow that all tunnel construction be stopped all over New South Wales.

The Coffs Harbour Bypass tunnels should be classed as the St Helena tunnel (which is the approx length of the longest of the Coffs tunnels) which allow all other dangerous goods except Class 1 and 2.1 to use the tunnels. The expected less than 20 of the prohibited dangerous goods vehicles which will continue to use the current route – which they have been doing since the current highway commenced – is miniscule compared to the 12,000

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approx vehicles which will divert to the highway. Trials allowing all vehicles to use tunnels are currently being trialled in Sydney and as this rule is a regulation not legislation, the ruling may be overturned in the near future anyway.

I understand that the operating control methods for the St Helena tunnel would be able to be used for the Coffs tunnels and would not need to be duplicated therefore saving money.

CONSTRUCT ONLY CONTRACT:

As we have fought so long for the tunnels to be reinstated, we do not want there to be any chance of any modifications to crucial elements. **A Detailed Design and a Construct only Contract is** requested so we can have confidence in the final product. The community also requests the opportunity to view the detailed design before it is accepted by Planning and the contract goes to tender.

Thank you for your consideration of my submission.

MARINA ROCKETT