

Appendix A Proposals on inland alternatives (via the Summerland Way)

This Appendix contains the following information:

- (a) Copy of submission made by the Member for Ballina to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Pacific Highway Upgrades (Tintenbar to Ewingsdale and Woodburn to Ballina projects), dated November 2005
Submission obtained from Parliamentary Inquiry website

- (b) Copy of submission from the Community Alliance for Road Sustainability, dated January 2006
Submission provided to the RTA, Pacific Highway General Manager

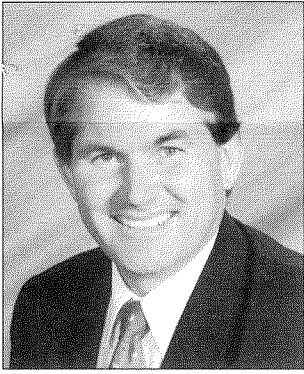
Submission
No 206

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Name: Mr Don Page MP
Position: Member for Ballina
Telephone:
Date Received: 24/11/2005

Subject:

Summary



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



DON PAGE, M.P.
MEMBER FOR BALLINA

R'cd
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21 November 2005

The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC
Chair
Parliamentary Inquiry into Pacific Highway Upgrades
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Gardiner

On behalf of the Members for Clarence (Steve Cansdell) and Lismore (Thomas George), I would like the Committee to consider an alternative route for upgrade to dual carriageway between Tyagarah/Ewingsdale and Grafton.

The rationale for considering this option is as follows:

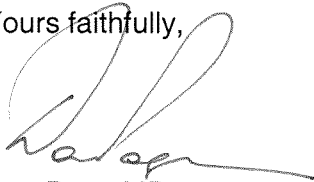
- This option is much less expensive because of cheaper land to the west and the fact that the State Government already owns most of the inland corridor. The road construction costs for the inland option have been estimated by a leading road building company at around \$1 billion, about a third of the cost of the proposed existing highway upgrade.
- The distance of the two routes is the same (around 165km). Please see attached map of the two options.
- Because the inland option is less expensive to build, it is likely to be completed in about a third of the time it would take to do the Pacific Highway upgrade between Tyagarah/Ewingsdale and Grafton. This would save many lives.
- The inland option would separate interstate through traffic (which is forecast to double by 2020) from local traffic (which is also forecast to increase due to strong coastal population growth). This separation is important now and into the future.
- The inland route would have less environmental impact because it does not traverse wetlands, high conservation value land and prime agricultural land.
- It would affect fewer people in a negative sense because it would avoid all existing villages and towns.

- The inland route would provide a much-needed upgrade of the Bangalow-Lismore Road which according to a recent NRMA report is not subject to any planned upgrade despite the need to do so.
- In the longer term, this inland route would be part of an inland freight corridor linking through to Beaudesert in Queensland, where a major freight terminal (road and rail) is proposed.
- There are certain black spots along the existing Pacific Highway route that need to be done regardless of which option is selected. For example, the Ballina Bypass is required for local safety reasons, i.e. to eliminate the dangerous Tintenbar Hill section and remove through traffic from Ballina township. Ministerial approval has been given and some pre-construction work has already been done.
- The section from Brisbane to Tyagarah/Ewingsdale is either completed or in the process of completion for a four-lane divided highway. It is unlikely any Government would duplicate a four-lane road further to the west of this corridor in the foreseeable future. The inland option proposed recognises this and that's why the inland diversion commences around the Ewingsdale/Tyagarah area. The section between Ewingsdale and Grafton has not yet been upgraded to dual carriageway so now is the time to compare these two options from a benefit/cost perspective.

The Members for Clarence, Lismore and myself are keen for a benefit/cost study to be done as a basis for comparison between the inland option versus the coastal (existing Pacific Highway) option. This should be done by an independent consultant, not the RTA. This can be done relatively quickly. Once a comparison is made it would then be possible to proceed to construction for the preferred route.

It is important to do this comparative analysis now before construction money is spent on the dual carriageway between the Tyagarah/Ewingsdale area and the Grafton area, otherwise an inland option will not be considered in the foreseeable future.

Yours faithfully,



Don Page MP
MEMBER FOR BALLINA

DP:bp

**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR ROAD SUSTAINABILITY
PROPOSAL**

From: Tony Gilding
Sent: Friday, 13 January 2006 18:13 PM
To: HIGGINS Bob G
Cc: [Sentence deleted for privacy reasons]
Subject: CARS proposal for an inland route

Dear Bob,

In 1992 the RTA prepared the North Coast Road Strategy which investigated 5 options for the main highway between Coffs Harbour, Grafton and the Queensland border.

[Sentence deleted for privacy reasons]

The then existing route of the Pacific Highway was selected. A great deal has changed over the 14 years since. The Northern Rivers [Grafton to Tweed and out to the Great Dividing Range] is now a very different region. SEQ and this region are part of the most dynamic growth centre in Australia. Approximately a quarter of Australia's population will live between Harvey Bay and Coffs Harbour.

The Northern Rivers one of the fastest growing regions in Australia

- has a much clearer idea of the kind of urban/rural mix it aspires to,
- has a strong relationship with SEQ
- the soon to be released Far North Coast Strategy [Evans Heads to Tweed] should clearly set out the population and settlement pattern felt as most appropriate for the next 20 years.

The SEQ Regional Plan 2005 to 2026 sets out where residential and commercial growth will occur there and how transport infrastructure will service this growth.

When all this is considered in the light of;

- that planning for the highway between Grafton and the border is still in the early stages [apart from Brunswick Heads to Tweed]
- the timeline for most of the construction is between 8 to 20 years,

It seems not just highly pertinent but very wise to revisit the intent of the 1992 study and to apply what we now know. I think we are all well aware that this is the time to get this right. The NSW Government will not get another opportunity to do this.

From the outset of the evaluation of the T2E section, CARS has believed that a much wider investigation of options was necessary.

While not easy for a community group to develop alternative ideas to that of the Government and the RTA we have collated resources amongst the community to produce an overall alternative strategy for road transport between Grafton and the Queensland border.

This work has been in 2 parts namely:

1. ideas surrounding the use of the Summerland Way all the way to the Queensland border [based on option D of the 1992 study] as the longer term solution.

2. ideas to utilise that section of the Pacific Highway already upgraded north of Brunswick Heads requiring a link between the Pacific Highway and the Summerland Way at Casino [consistent with aspects of option C of the 1992 study].

I have attached for your consideration the ideas contained in CARS Highway Plan 3. This is a revised version of what was presented to the Parliamentary Inquiry. We have also handed you separately a more detailed idea for linking the Summerland Way and the Pacific Highway.

This was done in the recognition that some link between the two is necessary no matter what the long term north/south route will be.

The options for this link are at present:

- upgrade of the Bruxner Highway
- upgrade of the Bangalow to Lismore road
- what is recognised as the 'Page' route
- a route based on the thinking of option C in the 1992 study.

It is important to understand that these proposals by us and others are seen as possible solutions and no doubt each of them have aspects that are flawed. We hope and trust that with the resources of the RTA the best possible solution can be found.

No doubt the possibility of finding a better solution to some extent depends upon the design specification chosen. We at CARS believe there is merit in considering specifications that are appropriate for the level of traffic expected in the medium term but with the ability to upgrade along the same route in the longer term. For this reason we do not believe that it is necessary to have M class highways along both the coastal and the inland route in the medium term.

An alternative inland route for trucks and a safety upgrade of the current coastal route is seen as the most desirable outcomes. We believe that this would be more affordable than a full M class upgrade of the current coastal route, be safer and be able to be constructed faster. Significant phasing is possible saving lives now.

We hope this is of some assistance to the RTA and we are willing to discuss any aspects of this email with the aim of finding the best overall strategy for the region and its residents.

Finally It is very hard for an evaluation to be made without some agreed criteria.

We have therefore attached a "New Road Criteria" document and it would be our suggestion that the two Grafton to Brunswick Heads alternatives be evaluated against this document to reflect a true comparison.

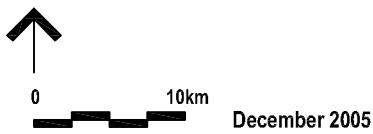
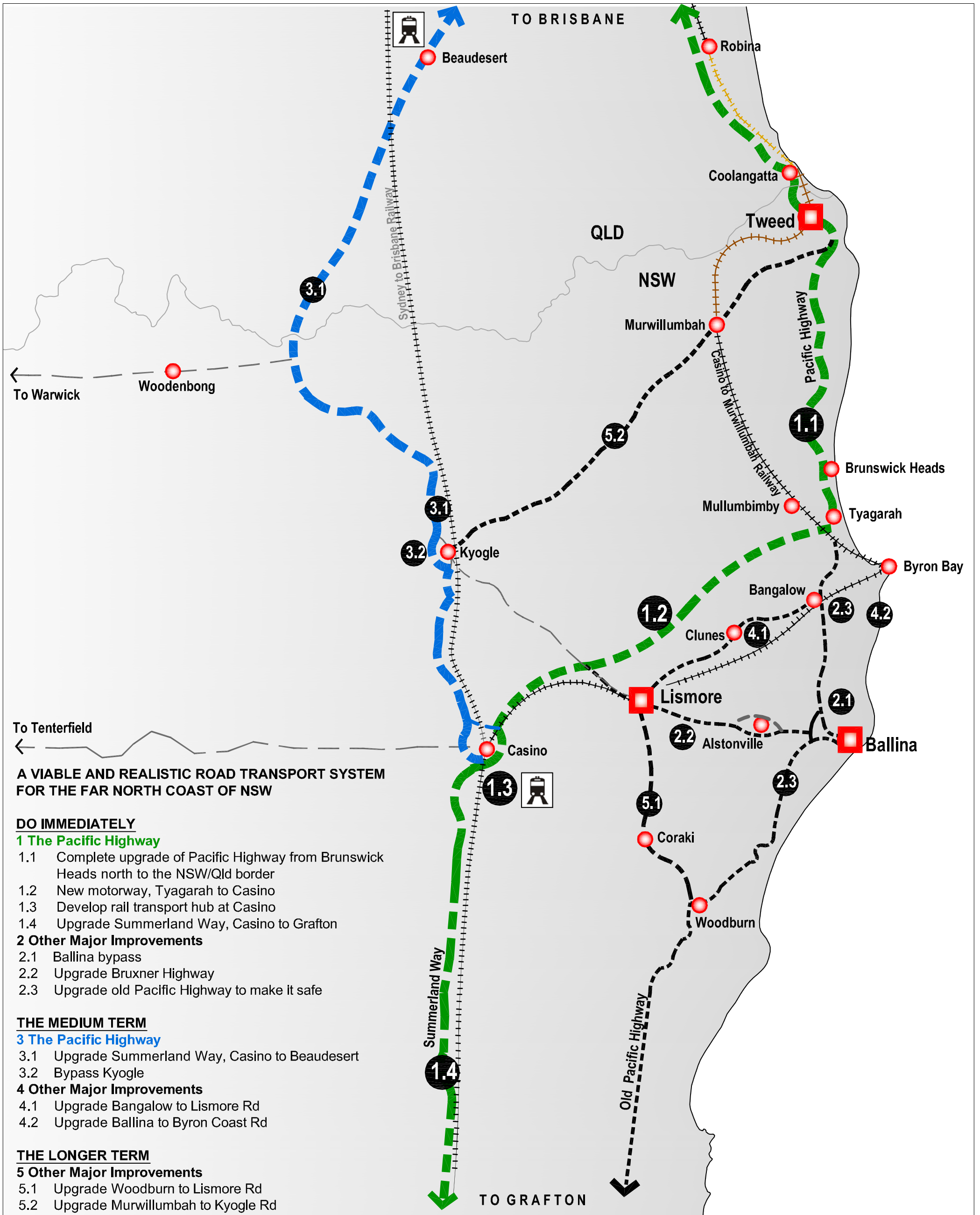
Regards
Tony Gilding
Convenor of CARS

Attachments : Diagram of Alternative Route
Synopsis of 1992 Report (not attached)
New Road Criteria

CRITERIA TO EVALUATE NEW HIGHWAY OPTIONS

The following criteria are a brief adaptation of RTA criteria being used for Tintenbar to Ewingsdale Pacific Highway Upgrade. They are not listed in any order of importance. Indeed the major task is to give a weighting value to the criteria. However noise must be considered a major issue as it required a special investigation by RTA 2003/4

1. Avoid severance impacts on contiguous residential areas.
2. Number of houses, farms and business that need to be acquired
3. Severance impacts on residential properties
4. Severance impacts on farms and businesses
5. Loss of property values
6. Road design to minimize crash rates (safety)
7. Extent of highway on steep slopes (< 4.5 %) to minimize peak noise events
8. Minimize absolute and relative noise burden for community
9. Minimize travel time for traffic
10. Minimize impact on wildlife, remnant and regenerated high value vegetation
11. Impacts on cultural and indigenous heritage
12. Impacts on waterways, and exposed hills and ridges
13. Visual impacts
14. Buildability – how practical is it to build.
15. Relative cost of route options.
16. Ability to stage construction
17. Total economic impact on area.



- Regional Rail/Road Hub
- Regional Centre
- Town or Village