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Date: 21<sup>st</sup> August 2009

Byron Ratepayers Association Inc.  
C/- John Bailey  
168 Tandys Lane  
BRUNSWICK HEADS 2483

Dear Sirs

**PACIFIC HIGHWAY, TYAGARAH:  
EAST COAST BLUES & ROOTS MUSIC FESTIVAL PTY LTD**

This report addresses the traffic-related matters associated with the proposed East Coast Blues & Roots Festival to be conducted on land adjacent to the Tyagarah interchange on the Pacific Highway.

While an initial assessment of the traffic impacts of the proposal was undertaken by Greg Alderson and Associates, as detailed in their report dated 27<sup>th</sup> May 2008, a further subsequent analysis has now been conducted by Cardno Eppell Olsen as set out in their report dated November 2008.

This report is based primarily on the Cardno Eppell Olsen material. It also takes into account the advices to Byron Shire Council from RTA dated 31st March 2009.

Although not spelt out in the Cardno Eppell Olsen report, it is understood the festival, over a five-day period, will be held during the Easter long weekend.

**ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

Temporary traffic arrangements are proposed to be put in place for the duration of the festival, as follows:

- the existing connection of the southbound Pacific Highway exit ramp to the Gulgun Road overpass will be closed, and all southbound traffic using the ramp will be required to utilize a temporary connection to Yarun Lane; and
- right turning movements at the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Grays Lane will be prohibited.

It is proposed that traffic approaching from the south (via the Pacific Highway) will utilize the northbound exit ramp, negotiate the Gulgun Road roundabout, cross the highway overpass, then proceed south along Tanner Lane and then turn left into the site. Traffic departing from the site toward the south will turn left from the site into Tanner Lane, and join the Pacific Highway at the existing at-grade Grays Lane intersection.

These restrictions will obviously have a significant detrimental impact on ease of local access to the areas east of the highway, including the local airstrip. In particular, south oriented travel to that area will involve an additional travel distance of at least 3 km, plus the inevitable delays involved in becoming embroiled with festival oriented traffic.

Festival traffic having a northerly orientation is proposed to exit from the Pacific Highway directly to Yarun Lane in approaching the site and park in an area specifically set aside for north-oriented traffic.

This overall strategy fundamentally misses the point that some traffic will undoubtedly arrive at the site via Gulgun Road. These vehicles are ignored in the analysis and proposed strategy. Since those vehicles, in utilising the highway overpass, would inevitably become intermingled with those arriving from the south, they would tend to be directed to park in the parking area intended for south-oriented patrons. The means by which such vehicles would then be able to return toward the north (to Mullumbimby?) is ignored in the analysis. This is a fundamental flaw in the overall proposal, and one not easily addressed.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Design traffic flows:**

The analysis presented by Cardno Eppell Olsen is fundamentally flawed in that it takes no account of the highly peaked nature of traffic flows which occur on the highway during the Easter holiday period, but rather relies on averaged flows representative of normal non-holiday periods. Obviously then, the results of the analyses cannot be relied upon in any way, since they do not represent the conditions likely to pertain while the festival is in operation.

### **Safety of traffic operations:**

As detailed above, the proposed traffic management strategy relies upon southbound traffic departing from the site joining the Pacific Highway at the existing at-grade Grays Lane intersection, where only a short acceleration lane facility exists.

Since a very high proportion of patrons are anticipated to depart from the site late at night, when the required gap acceptance procedure at the intersection is rendered additionally difficult by the glare of approaching headlights, this strategy necessarily involves a high degree of risk, in my view an unacceptably high risk.

The situation is further aggravated by the finding by Cardno Eppell Olsen that the intersection will be approaching capacity conditions in future design years, even under the averaged flows upon which that analysis is based, a situation which encourages turning traffic to select unduly short, and therefore potentially hazardous, gaps in the through traffic stream.

The fundamental weakness and inappropriateness of this overall strategy is emphasized when it is realized that use of the existing modern high standard southbound entry ramp at the Tyagarah interchange by southbound patrons departing from the site is proposed to be deliberately prevented. Such a strategy is inherently and fundamentally flawed and should not be accepted under any circumstances.

### **Queuing:**

A fundamental and basic concern regarding the design and safe operation of any high-speed rural freeway, such as the Pacific Highway, is that the likelihood that queues will form on the through carriageways is absolutely minimized. Drivers travelling on such highways, particularly holidaymakers such as those prevalent at Easter time, have virtually no expectation of encountering queues of stopped or slow-moving traffic on the highway, and the presence of any such queues automatically creates a high likelihood of severe rear-end collisions.

With this in mind, it is unacceptable that the Cardno Eppell Olsen report makes no reference or recommendations regarding the management of queues at entry to the site. According to their own data, traffic entering the site at one of the nominated entry points could amount to 830 vehicles per hour. If in a single lane, this means that the entry ticketing and checking arrangements would need to accommodate, on average, one vehicle every 4.3 seconds. This would be a very high flow even for regular drivers using an automated ticketing



system, let alone holidaymakers generally unfamiliar with the system, who may well find themselves searching for the appropriate documentation, or receiving instructions regarding parking in an unfamiliar environment.

The only reference to queuing which I have seen in the material prepared in support of the development is in the May 2008 Alderson report, which stated that “the intention is that vehicles would be able to enter the site easily and that the first check point on the site would be well within the site, to avoid any queuing on the public road system”. This generalized statement is neither sufficient nor reassuring in any way. There is no detailed or quantified assessment of the potential for queuing, which would require a specific statement regarding what might happen at any “checkpoint”, an assessment of the time required to process each vehicle, and provision to accommodate unforeseen events such as an entrant with no ticket etc.

In these circumstances, the potential for extensive queuing to occur, potentially extending back on the highway, is obvious and unacceptable. There is also an even greater potential for queuing to occur on the local road system, to the significant detriment of ease of local traffic movements.

#### **Parking provisions:**

It will be essential that adequate directional signing and parking restrictions are installed on the Pacific Highway and in Tanner Lane. The willingness of Council and the RTA to allow and enforce such a signing has not been confirmed.

In addition, at the time the site was observed, extensive areas of it appeared to be waterlogged. The measures to be implemented if the parking areas are partially or wholly untraffickable due to inclement weather during or preceding the event are unknown, but may have markedly unacceptable impacts on the road system in the vicinity of the site.

Further, no provisions appear to be in place to cater for festival in attendances in excess of those currently said to be expected.

In any event, why would not patrons familiar with the area, and desirous of avoiding congestion during departure, park to the west of the highway and walk across the highway via the Gulgan Road overpass on the footway on the northern side of that overpass and thus contribute to significant congestion and disruption in that area?

The Cardno Eppell Olsen report makes no assessment of the adequacy of the proposed parking provisions. However, based on the data set out in the Alderson report, it is likely that the parking provisions will be prove inadequate: such an outcome would exacerbate tendencies for queuing to extend onto Gulgan Road (and the Pacific Highway) and result in extensive parking on the roads in the vicinity of the site, with a resulting significant increase in queuing and congestion.

#### **Sustainability Considerations:**

The concept of conducting a festival of this type at a location beyond reasonable and safe walking or cycling distance of centres of accommodation and catering facilities is contrary to current concepts of sustainability. Such an event should be held at a location where a wide range of accommodation and dining facilities is available within walking distance of the event.

#### **CONCLUSION**

From the viewpoint of traffic operations, traffic safety, acceptable parking provision and management, and sustainability, the proposal as outlined in the available documents lodged in support of the proposal (the Alderson report and the Cardno Eppell Olsen report) is unacceptable in terms of:

- potential hazard to the travelling public (particularly through traffic on the Pacific Highway);
- likely detrimental impacts on ease of local movement and access to existing local businesses;
- high potential for overflow of parking demands onto the nearby road system;
- an undue reliance on private car, rather than pedestrian and/or cycle, travel.

The proposal in its present form is incapable of reasonable approval.

Yours faithfully  
HOLLAND TRAFFIC CONSULTING PTY LTD



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