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Dan McClure  
Project Manager  
Princes Highway Upgrade Program  
Transport for NSW

<Date>

Dear Mr McClure

### **Submission on the Moruya Bypass**

I am writing to you about the proposed Moruya Bypass corridor as described in the online Strategic Corridor Options report and at the community information sessions held in Moruya between the 22 and 27 May 2021. I provide the following comments:

The community consultation undertaken for this project was minimal given the scale and impact that the bypass will have on the amenity and environment of the Moruya River floodplain. It was announced in the lead up to the 2019 NSW elections without any consultation with the community or local businesses. The first round of consultation was conducted just weeks after the Black Summer bushfires and at the start of the COVID pandemic and was entirely online. There was one weeks notice for this second round of consultation which comprised 2 community information sessions and 2 market stalls together with a 100 page online Options report, a brochure and a survey all of which promoted Transport for NSW's preferred route. This is not genuine community consultation.

The Options report describes 5 short-listed route options which were arrived at following a number of workshops. It concludes by identifying a preferred route which will be taken forward to the design stage. Information about these workshops such as who was involved, the methods used to score the various route options and detailed justifications for the route options chosen was not provided. The whole decision-making process lacks transparency.

According to the Options report, the preferred route for the bypass was chosen on the basis of community acceptance of the route based on the first round of community consultation, which was neither comprehensive nor representative, and a one day values workshop. No detailed technical assessments have been undertaken of the 5 short-listed options nor have there been any costings to determine the value-for-money of these options. Risk identification and mitigation assessments and other technical assessments are only now being undertaken, but only for the preferred route. These assessments should have been undertaken across all of the short-listed options in order to arrive at a preferred corridor option based on a fully informed analysis. Without this, how can the community be confident that the preferred option is indeed the best route for the bypass?

The Moruya bypass as proposed in the Options report will comprise an elevated 4 lane highway on 5m pylons spaced 40m apart. The preferred option crosses the Moruya River floodplain at its widest part. This will have a huge visual impact on the river and its surrounding landscapes as well as the setting of the Moruya township with its beautiful natural vistas. It will also affect the largest area of productive agricultural land along the river and cause major disruption to farming activities, as well as changes to the character of the affected farmland and the flow of floodwaters across this land. By crossing the Moruya River

floodplain at its widest part, the preferred option will impact on the greatest area of high conservation value wetlands and threatened vegetation, as well as creeks that feed into these nationally important wetlands. The preferred route also cuts through a large remnant of endangered woodland that connects to extensive forest areas to the east severing wildlife corridors and making this route potentially more bushfire prone. The longer the bypass, the more properties that are impacted by it, either directly or indirectly. There is no information in the Options report about how many properties or dwellings are likely to be affected by each of the short-listed options, yet this should have been an important consideration in choosing a preferred route. It would seem obvious that the shorter the preferred bypass route, the less the impact would be on farmland, dwellings, the environment and the visual amenity of Moruya.

The preferred bypass route has been located as far as possible from town to reduce noise impacts. However, Moruya's small business owners that rely on passing traffic outside peak holiday periods are concerned that the further the bypass is from town, the less likely it will be that travellers will visit Moruya, which is not in itself a tourist destination. All other bypasses on the south coast run along the edge of their towns which are visible from the highway. Regardless of where this elevated bypass is located, it will generate noise that will carry across the Moruya floodplain, particularly if the traffic is travelling at 100kph, as predicted by Transport for NSW. Other south coast towns that have been bypassed have noise barriers installed to reduce the amenity impacts on the nearby towns. There is no discussion in any of the documents about how traffic noise will be managed and there is no real consideration of the impacts of the bypass on small business.

In conclusion, it seems that the main reason that the Transport for NSW project team chose the preferred option for the Moruya bypass was because of its distance from town even though it is longer, visually more intrusive, environmentally more destructive and will result in the direct loss of more property. It is also likely to have a significantly higher cost than any shorter option. If Moruya needs a bypass, then the shorter and less destructive it is, the better. The community cannot support the preferred route for the bypass without fully understanding the scale and impacts of the proposal. The information that has been provided so far is not sufficient for the community to make a fully informed decision and we have not been provided with adequate time to ensure that that any decision we do make is the best one for the town and its residents.

Yours sincerely

<Name>

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