



MEDIA RELEASE 30 April 2009

Byron Bay traffic – solution is not bypass.

According to the findings from the Main Road 545 (MR545) traffic study, Byron's traffic solution is about access not a bypass. Byron Shire Council's director of asset management services, Phil Holloway said the MR545 study found over 80% of vehicles enter and stay within Byron Bay for at least three hours with most staying longer.

"The MR545 Study shows Byron Bay town is the destination for most vehicles and therefore improved access to, and traffic distribution within the town centre, is required. Not a bypass of it," he said. "A true bypass would serve a minority of travellers and is hard to justify in terms of cost-to-benefit and attracting the necessary approvals and funding," Mr Holloway said.

The MR545 Study recommends a second rail crossing that links Butler Street to Marvell Street via the old emergency rail crossing and a new roundabout at Jonson and Marvell Street.

"The location of the second rail crossing is the key to successful traffic flow movement.

"The study shows that the further south a new access point is provided, the less traffic it will attract and therefore not alleviate the congestion and lack of traffic movement most notable at peak times such as Christmas and Easter.

In "receiving and noting" the report, Council resolved as a matter of urgency to seek the necessary state approvals and write to the Minister for Transport and Roads.

Byron Shire staff will also be meeting with the Australian Rail Track Corporation to discuss the option of a second rail crossing.

State authority approval for the second rail crossing is required prior to the works being undertaken. Council also requested staff to prepare a report on the Development Application and design work previously undertaken for the option known as the "mini bypass".

"Encouragingly, the RTA welcomed the study and is accepting of its conclusions," Mr Holloway said. The MR545 study looked at the current demands (2008) versus the future needs (2018 and 2028) of the 19 kilometre long transport corridor from the Pacific Highway interchange at Ewingsdale Road to the Ballina Shire boundary.

Consultants engaged for the study, OPUS, reviewed and modelled the number of vehicles the road carries, the origin and destination of traffic, vehicle traffic times and intersection capacity at key points along the corridor.

"The MR545 Study had a broader scope than previous studies and looked at the needs of the road corridor, considered potential future developments and has provided direction regarding the role of park and ride and car parking," Mr Holloway said.

Byron Shire staff will also prepare a report to Council on the potential for Park and Ride and explore the role car parking can have in improving the amenity of Byron Bay.

A copy of the report to Council and the Strategic Study of Main Road 545 (MR545) can be found at www.byron.nsw.gov.au/meetings/2009-04-09-ordinary.

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