

Moorland to Herons Creek EIS

Working Paper No. 10
Overview of Social Effects



Ove Arup and Partners

**Moorland to Herons Creek -
Pacific Highway Upgrade**
Overview of Social Effects

November 2003

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Moorland to Herons Creek - Pacific Highway Upgrade *Overview of Social Effects*

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For and on behalf of
Environmental Resources Management
Australia

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SUMMARY

This report has identified a number of positive and negative impacts of the proposed upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Moorland and Herons Creek. From a regional perspective the upgrade would result in further improvements for both private and commercial highway users with reduced driving times and a safer driving environment.

From a local perspective, the preferred option would result in the loss of four dwellings and land acquisitions from a total of 86 landowners. Some existing dwellings would be closer to the highway alignment than currently and, as a result, may experience increased levels of dust (during construction) and noise from the highway both during and post construction.

The major social impacts of the upgrade would be in relation to the villages of Kew and Johns River. Both villages would enjoy significant improvements to both amenity and safety. These improvements, along with the recently completed reticulation of sewer to Kew, may be a catalyst for further residential development in the villages. However there would also be significant negative impacts on the villages, particularly in regard to the impact on some businesses with a reliance on highway-related trade.

Both villages have a majority of business activities that rely in whole or in part on highway traffic. Whilst there are some opportunities for mitigation of adverse impacts it is likely that the bypassing of the villages may result in the closure of some businesses with a particularly high dependence on highway-related trade.. In addition, it is noted that as businesses generally employ a large number of family members, any business closures are likely to have significant flow on effects within the community.

Potential impacts on tourism in the Camden Haven have also been addressed. The proposed highway bypass of Kew may impact on visitation to the area, particularly where the traveller has not made a prior decision to visit the Camden Haven. It would be necessary to further promote tourism in the region, particularly in the low season when visitors appear to be more flexible with their travel plans.

Options for mitigation of identified negative impacts on the townships of Johns River and Kew have been recommended. These would require a co-ordinated approach by the RTA, local Council and the community for successful implementation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

This report incorporates the following items:

- a general statement of expected social impacts. In this report, social impacts are taken to incorporate those arising from the construction of the proposed upgrade on the human population, and include health, demographic and economic considerations;
- results of consultation with regard to perceived social impacts;
- opportunities for avoidance and mitigation of adverse social impacts;
- discussion of likely impacts on access, business and service facilities which are dependent on highway traffic;
- discussion of use of the road by all forms of transport and expected access and linkages to facilities by road user groups; and
- discussion of the likely impact of the Kew bypass on tourism in the Camden Haven.

This report is not a cost benefit analysis and does not attempt to evaluate all economic impacts of the proposed highway upgrade.

1.2 THE STUDY AREA

The study area is illustrated on *Figure 1.1*.

At its southern end, the project would commence at Camp Obadiah connecting with the proposed dual carriageway upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Coopernook and Moorland. At its northern end, the project would connect with the existing dual carriageway near Bobs Creek Road at Herons Creek.

The section of the study area from the southern project limit to just north of Stewart's River is within the Greater Taree City Council area and includes the village of Johns River. The section of the study area from just north of the Stewart's River to the northern project limit is within the Hastings Council area and includes the townships of Kew and Kendall and the localities of Rossglen and Herons Creek.

1.3 SCOPING OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The types of social and economic impacts associated with road upgrade projects of this nature that are likely to be experienced by particular stakeholders have been identified. This is referred to as 'scoping'.

The township of Kew and the village of Johns River are expected to experience the greatest cumulative social impact, as a result of the bypass of the highway around these urban nodes.

Generally, the anticipated impacts caused by the upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Moorland and Herons Creek include changes to one or more of the attributes listed below. Some of these impacts (such as dust, noise, visual impact and disturbance to cultural heritage sites) are addressed in separate impact assessment reports, but are referred to as appropriate in this assessment. These include:

- people's way of life – how they live, work, play and interact with one another on a day-to-day basis;
- Their culture – shared beliefs, customs and values;
- Their community – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities; and
- Their environment – including perceived air and water quality impacts, noise impacts and changes to vehicle and pedestrian safety, both during and following construction operations.

More specifically, the negative social and economic impacts resulting from the upgrade of the Highway potentially may include:

- uncertainty about impacts and development possibilities, which may manifest in individual community members through increased stress, anxiety or apathy about the future;
- loss of highway-related business due to bypassing of Johns River and Kew and perceived to be exacerbated because of the proposed configuration of access to and from Kew.
- changes to personal economic situations through changes to level of income and property values and loss of areas available for agricultural production;
- changes in status or type of employment, or becoming unemployed;
- perceptions that individual property owners and residents would suffer because of decisions made for the benefit of the wider community;
- reduction in existing amenity values, particularly for rural and semi-rural environments, where attributes such as views, the presence of flora and fauna, trees, and a peaceful and quiet environment strongly contribute to personal and community well being in areas that may be impacted by the proposed highway upgrade;
- perception of changes in existing levels of community cohesion and integration;
- changes to community networks as a result of disruption to town and village access and circulation as well as property and business access issues both during and following construction activities.

1.4 ***STAKEHOLDER GROUPS***

A relatively large number of stakeholders have been identified as having an interest in the proposed Highway upgrade. Four stakeholder groups have been identified as having an interest in the project. Of these, Groups 1 and 2 are likely to experience social and economic impacts to varying degrees (either positive or negative). Group 3 is unlikely to be affected by the project and group 4 may experience some positive impacts as a result of using the improved highway.

1.4.1 ***Group 1***

This group comprises property owners within the study area that could be directly affected by the highway upgrading.

1.4.2 ***Group 2***

This group comprises:

- local businesses;
- community facilities and services, such as schools, community halls and churches;
- recreational facilities, including the Camden Haven Golf Club (including restaurant and poker machine facilities, as well as veterans' golf, ladies golf and lawn bowls associations);
- community groups and environmental interest groups; and
- emergency services.

1.4.3 ***Group 3***

This group comprises State and Commonwealth Government agencies, Local Government, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Federal, State and Local elected representatives.

1.4.4 ***Group 4***

This group comprises:

- the broader community in the study area; and
- existing and potential users of the highway following its upgrading (such as users of private vehicles and transport companies).

Figure 1.1 The Study Area

*2.1**CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES*

As a relatively large number of stakeholders exist within the study area who may potentially experience some form of social and/or economic impact, the need exists for effective community consultation. Extensive community consultation facilitates the gathering of sufficient and appropriate information to assess the nature of the potential effects of the proposed Highway upgrade on the relevant stakeholder groups.

The objectives of community consultation, as set out in the Community Involvement Plan (Ove Arup, 2000) on this project are:

- to ensure an open, accountable and transparent community consultation process;
- to ensure all potentially affected property owners and interested stakeholders are provided with sufficient information about the project and the likely impacts so that they can provide informed input;
- to ensure appropriate and direct communication with property owners and/or managers in relation to access to and investigations on landholdings within the study area by project team members including RTA representatives;
- to encourage community support and involvement in the project to facilitate better and generally acceptable outcomes;
- to identify opportunities for mitigation of adverse social and economic impacts and possibly the need for ongoing monitoring of the same.
- to provide a range of accessible opportunities for stakeholders, interested groups and the wider public to contribute to the project through issues identification, information provision, and options evaluation; and
- to build an ongoing relationship between the RTA, its contractors, and stakeholders in order to gain long term support for the project and in particular the preferred route.

*2.2**CONSULTATION METHODS*

A program of public information, consultation and participation has been prepared for implementation throughout development of the project to ensure continued stakeholder involvement. There is a close connection between the outputs of community consultation, the identification of perceived impacts of the proposed upgrade of the Pacific Highway and the development of appropriate mitigation measures for adverse impacts.

3.1

BACKGROUND

Social and economic statistics have been obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2001 Census Data (ABS 2001) specifically for the Collection Districts (CD) that occur within the study area (see *Figure 3.1* and *Table 3.1*). This allows a social profile to be established presenting baseline information used for the assessment of social impacts and for ongoing monitoring of the effects of the proposed Highway upgrade. Note - some CDs extend well beyond the area likely to be directly affected by the proposed Highway upgrade.

Census data for each relevant CD has been obtained and analysed to determine the social and economic structure of the communities that lie adjacent to the existing and the preferred highway upgrade option. These communities may experience some level of social impact and economic impact (either beneficial or adverse) as a result of the upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Moorland and Herons Creek.

Table 3.1 *Collection Districts covering the upgrade area*

Collection District	Area Covered by Collection District
Hastings LGA	
1090806	West of the Pacific Highway (excluding Kew and Kendall)
1090807	Kendall township area
1090713	Kew township area
1090715	North and east of Kew and Kendall (includes Herons Creek)
1090701	South east of Kew (east of the Pacific Highway)
Greater Taree LGA	
1091007	West of Pacific Highway (excluding Johns River)
1091001	East of Pacific Highway (excluding Johns River)
1091013	Johns River village

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census Data 2001

Figure 3.1 Collection Districts

3.2

POPULATION PROFILE

Table 3.2 documents the total population numbers of all CDs within the study area. As can be seen from this table, the total population for relevant CDs is 3222 persons (with a male/female split of 1605 [50%] and 1617 [50%] respectively). Kew has a total population of 144 persons, Kendall 732 persons and Johns River 118 persons.

Table 3.2 *Population (2001)*

Collection District	Total Population (m/f)	% of population
Hastings LGA		
West of Pacific Highway (1090806)	675 (343/332)	21.0
Kendall (1090807)	732 (354/378)	22.8
Kew (1090713)	144 (74/70)	4.6
North and East of Kew and Kendall (1090715)	267 (124/143)	8.3
South-east of Kew, East of Pacific Highway (1090701)	438 (216/222)	13.7
Subtotal	2,256(1,111/1,145)	70.4
Greater Taree LGA		
West of Pacific Highway (1091007)	330 (164/166)	10.3
East of Pacific Highway (1091001)	508 (266/242)	15.9
Johns River (1091013)	118 (64/54)	3.4
Subtotal	953(494/462)	29.6
Total	3222 (1605/1617)	100

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census Data 2001

3.3

AGE

Within the CD assessment area, the population is concentrated in two peak age groups (refer to Table 3.3). The first peak is the 0 to 14 age bracket (23.4% of the total population) and secondly, the 35 – 49 year age group (24% of the total population). Note also that the 55+ age group accounts for 27.2% of the study area population.

The first two peak age groups reflect that the area has a high percentage of households in the early to mid stages of family formation. The latter peak age group reflects that there are a high percentage of retirees in the study area, for whom the North Coast is a popular retirement destination.

Table 3.3 *Age Profile*

Age	Total	% of total
0 - 4	200	6.2
5 - 9	264	8.2
10 - 14	291	9.0
15 - 19	234	7.2
20 - 24	85	2.6
25 - 29	97	3.0
30 - 34	187	5.8
35 - 39	253	7.8
40 - 44	278	8.6
45 - 49	240	7.4
50 - 54	212	6.5
55 - 59	251	7.8
60 - 64	192	5.5
65 - 69	180	5.6
70 - 74	115	3.6
75 - 79	88	2.7
80 - 84	40	1.2
84 - 89	16	0.5
90 - 94	6	0.2
95 - 98	3	0.1
Total	3232**	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census Data 2001

** = Discrepancy in total population number between *Table 3.2* and *3.3* originates from Australian Bureau of Statistics data.

The median age for each LGA and CD are presented in *Table 3.4* below. The median age within the study area ranges between 34 and 48 years of age. The median age at Kew and Johns River is 48 and 44 years respectively. This compares with the NSW and Australian median age of 35 years. The median age indicates that the population structure of the study area is one that has a high proportion of older age groups, particularly towards the northern end of the study area.

Table 3.4 *Median Age*

LGA/Collector District	Median Age (years)
Hastings LGA	43
West of Pacific Highway (1090806)	38
Kendall (1090807)	34
Kew (1090713)	48
North and East of Kew and Kendall (1090715)	37
South-east of Kew, East of Pacific Highway (1090701)	45
Greater Taree LGA	40
West of Pacific Highway (1091007)	45
East of Pacific Highway (1091001)	36
Johns River (1091014)	44
NSW	35
Australia	35

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census Data 2001

Table 3.5 lists the 2001 unemployment and employment figures for Hastings and Greater Taree LGAs and each of the CDs forming the assessment area. Employed persons mean all persons aged 15 years and over, who, during the reference week:

- worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers) or
- worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (ie contributing family workers); or
- were employees who had a job but were not at work and were:
 - away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week; or
 - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week; or
 - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement; or
 - on strike or locked out; or
 - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job; or
- were employers or own account workers, who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

Unemployed persons are defined as persons aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week, and:

- had actively looked for full time or part time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and:
 - were available for work in the reference week; or
 - were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week, and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

It is noted that although employment figures fluctuate, they provide a general indication of employment and unemployment levels and are suitable for an assessment of this nature.

It can be seen from *Table 3.5* that the unemployment rate for the CD assessment area ranged between 11.7% for the area southeast of Kew, 13.3% for Kew, and 28.6% for Johns River. These unemployment rates are far greater than the current Australian rate of 7.4% and NSW of 7.2%. It is however similar to the unemployment rates of the Mid North Coast, which is 13.2%.

Table 3.5 *Employment Statistics*

LGA/Collection District	Number Unemployed	Number employed	Unemployment Rate (%)
Australia (May 2001)	660,709	8,298,606	7.4
NSW (2001)	213,196	2,748,396	7.2
Mid North Coast	14,046	97,071	13.2
Hastings LGA	1501	13260	10.2
West of Pacific Highway (1090806)	33	216	13.3
Kendall (1090807)	35	228	13.3
Kew (1090713)	8	52	13.3
North and East of Kew and Kendall (1090715)	19	92	17.1
South-east of Kew, East of Pacific Highway (1090701)	19	143	11.7
Greater Taree LGA	1992	14348	12.2
West of Pacific Highway (1091007)	19	102	15.7
East of Pacific Highway (1091001)	38	143	21.0
Johns River (1091014)	10	25	28.6

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census Data 2001

From *Table 3.6* it can be seen that retail trade employs the largest proportion of the employed population in the assessment area (15.9%). Agriculture, forestry and fishing employs the second greatest proportion (12.5%), with manufacturing employing 12.3%. Given the relatively high proportion of the population that is dependant on retail trade, any adverse impacts of bypassing Kew and Johns River on highway related trade may have a significant impact on employment levels.

These figures simply state the numbers of employed persons residing in the assessment area, according to industry. They do not indicate the number of individuals employed within industries existing within the assessment area (although this would be the situation in some instances).

Table 3.6 *Employment by Industry*

Industry	Total Numbers	% of Total
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	122	12.5
Mining	6	0.6
Manufacturing	85	8.7
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	6	0.6
Construction	94	9.6
Wholesale Trade	41	4.2
Retail Trade	156	15.9
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	60	6.1
Transport and Storage	40	4.1
Communication Services	21	2.1
Finance and Insurance	12	1.2
Property and Business Services	57	5.8
Government Administration and Defence	24	2.4
Education	62	6.3
Health and Community Services	121	12.3
Cultural and Recreational Services	18	1.8
Personal and other Services	21	2.1
Non-classifiable Economic Units	3	0.3
Not Stated	30	3.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001

3.5

MODE OF TRAVEL TO WORK

Table 3.7 lists the modes of travel used by individuals in the assessment area to reach their place of employment. The majority of individuals in the assessment area (58%) travel to work by car as the driver with a further 5% as passenger. This reflects the importance of the road system, including the Pacific Highway, in the assessment area, to facilitate access to work locations. As may be expected in rural areas where the agricultural sector is an important employer, a large proportion (14.4%) of people worked at home. Similarly in an area with small townships such as Kew and Johns River, a noticeable proportion of people (5%) walked to work.

Table 3.7 *Mode of Travel to Work*

Transport Mode	Total Numbers	% of Total
One Method Only		
Train	3	0.3
Bus	3	0.6
Car, as driver	545	58
Car, as passenger	47	5.0
Motor Bike/Scooter	5	0.5
Other	14	1.5
Walked Only	47	5.0
Two Methods		
Train and other	0	0
Other		
Worked at home	135	14.4
Did not go to work	112	11.9
Not stated	25	2.6

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001

3.6

WEEKLY INCOME

The income levels for the assessment area are presented in Table 3.8. From this table, it can be seen that the largest proportion of the population (16.4%) in 2001 earned between \$200 and \$299 per week. Approximately 15% of the population in the assessment area earned between \$160 and \$199 per week and approximately 10% earned between \$300 and \$399 per week. The weekly individual income for persons within the study area is significantly lower than the prevailing average individual weekly earnings for Australians (\$300 to 399 per week).

Table 3.8 *Weekly Individual Income*

Weekly Individual Income (\$)	Total Numbers	% of Total
Negative/Nil	140	5.7
1 to 39	36	1.5
40 to 79	58	2.4
80 to 119	74	3.0
120 to 159	240	9.8
160 to 199	361	14.7
200 to 299	401	16.4
300 to 399	246	10.1
400 to 499	177	7.2
500 to 599	188	7.7
600 to 699	93	3.8
700 to 799	65	2.7
800 to 999	71	2.9
1000 to 1499	55	2.2
>1500	18	0.7
Not Stated	217	8.9

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census Data 2001

3.7

CONCLUSION

Analysis of census data indicates that the population of the study area has the following characteristics:

- The median age of the study population, which ranges from 34 - 48, is on average higher than NSW average of 35.
- Income levels between \$160 to \$299 for the study population are lower than the NSW average of \$300 to \$399.
- The unemployment rate, which ranges from 12.2% to 28.6%, is significantly higher than the NSW rate of 7.2%.
- There is a high dependency on private motor vehicles in the study area compared to other methods of travel.

The lower than average income levels and relatively high unemployment indicate that the communities may be less able to withstand the loss of employment opportunities that may occur as a result of the highway deviation. On the other hand, changes in employment opportunities are less likely to affect retirees in the study area. Improved communication with regional centres would have a positive impact to retirees and other, providing better access to community facilities and services. This is particularly relevant given the high car dependency of the population.

This chapter of the report discusses the likely social and economic impacts of the preferred option. Regional impacts and local impacts are addressed. A questionnaire was developed by Arup and distributed to businesses in Kew and Johns River. The results are included in *Annex A* and have been taken into consideration in this chapter of the report. Issues raised during community consultation and a review of similar bypass project assessments have also been taken into consideration in the identification and assessment of potential impacts.

4.1

REGIONAL IMPACTS

A number of positive regional impacts associated with the highway upgrade have been identified:

- general highway improvements are enhancing access to the region for local short stay tourism;
- improvements to the highway are increasing opportunities for commerce, industry and tourism activities between Sydney and Brisbane and centres in between;
- the combination of electronic communication and surface transport improvements allow service industry to more effectively service the region and beyond;
- reduced highway travel times and improved efficiency and safety are likely to contribute to the attraction of further economic development to the mid-north coast region;
- the safety, capacity and convenience of access from the Pacific Highway will influence the continued development of Kendall as a rural village and as a node for tourism and cottage industries. The recent connection of Kew and Kendall to a reticulated sewerage system is also likely to encourage more residential development;
- the Boral Hard-Rock Quarry at Johns River and Herons Creek Timber Mill at Herons Creek are significant employers of local workers and generators of significant income for the region, and would continue to require good access to and from the highway (especially for heavy vehicles including B-doubles). The same can be said for the quarries of Hurd Haulage at Dunbogan and Bonny Hills, which utilise Ocean Drive (east of Kew) and the Pacific Highway for transporting material, and Boral concrete batching plants at Laurieton and Wauchope which utilise the highway to transport material to Kew and Kendall;
- With the improvements that have already occurred to the Pacific Highway, there is a high level of movement particularly by service industry personnel between Taree and Port Macquarie. The upgrade of the Moorland to Herons Creek section would further contribute to this increased activity;

- Improved fuel efficiency for vehicles using the upgraded Highway due to more consistent driving speeds and superior horizontal and vertical alignment; and
- Improved accessibility to and within the region. Some residents in Kew, Johns River and surrounding areas may receive multiplier effects flowing from the Highway upgrade, both during construction (an increase in construction and related employment), and after construction (increased employment in service industries due to better access).

It is considered that there are no negative regional impacts that would result from the proposed upgrade of the Highway.

4.2

JOHNS RIVER

The preferred option at Johns River is a bypass, located approximately 300 metres to the west of the village. It would diverge from the existing highway approximately 1.6km south of Johns River and rejoin the existing highway alignment approximately 250 metres north of the existing village. A grade-separated interchange at Stewart's River Road would provide direct connection between the rural areas to the west and the village and northbound ramps would provide access to and from the village. Southbound access would be provided along the former Highway.

4.2.1

Positive Impacts

The likely positive impacts for Johns River include:

Residential Amenity

- Reduced traffic volumes and noise levels in the village of Johns River as a result of the bypass would improve amenity for residents;
- The utility of the Johns River Community Hall and related recreation reserve, and its accessibility to pedestrians would be improved;
- Improved amenity of residential areas may increase the desirability of Johns River as a place to live;

Business Effects

- Additional residential development in the area that may occur as a result of an improvement to residential amenity resulting from the highway bypass may have a positive impact on existing business. It is noted that the Tavern owner estimated 50 % of his business is local and that 80% of the customers to the mechanic are also of local origin.
- There is likely to be some short-term positive economic effect due to increased patronage of local businesses during construction of the Highway upgrade.

Safety

- Increased safety for local residents living immediately adjacent to the existing Pacific Highway, including improved safety for children accessing the Johns River School;
- As the village would no longer be severed by a major highway, pedestrian, cycle and vehicular movement on local roads throughout the area would be more convenient and safer, particularly for children catching buses to schools in Taree and Kew/Laurieton; and
- Increased safety for vehicles gaining ingress to and egress from the entire length of the upgraded highway as a result of the incorporation of higher standard intersections and filtering lanes into the highway design.

4.2.2

Negative Impacts

The following negative impacts for Johns River have been identified:

Property Impacts

- 6 existing and proposed rural residential lots to the north of Stewart's River Road would be severed or otherwise directly impacted as a result of the Highway upgrade

Residential Amenity

- There are at least 4 dwellings located to the north and south of Stewart's River Road that would be closer to the upgraded Highway. Amenity for these residents may be adversely affected both during construction (short term increases in dust, construction noise, vibration) and post construction (increase in traffic noise exposure to vehicle emissions). These impacts would be particularly relevant to those residents who have chosen their current semi-rural location for lifestyle values, away from sources of noise and traffic intrusion caused by the existing alignment of the highway.

Access

- There would be no direct access from Wharf Road to the bypass or Bulleys Road from the village, which would result in marginally longer trips for the relatively small number of vehicles making these trips.

Business Effects

- Current businesses located in Johns River village are a general store, service station, mechanical repairs, the Blacksmiths Inn and Orchids on the Highway (a roadside stall). A monthly community market is held at the Community Hall. All businesses with the exception of the general store participated in a survey of existing businesses conducted in 2002. The orchid seller and service station both indicated that 90% of their business is sourced from highway traffic. These two operators considered that their businesses would close as a result of the bypass.

- The tavern and community markets estimated that 50% and 80% of their business respectively is from highway traffic. These operators considered that the bypass would be likely to have an adverse impact on their businesses.
- Closure of any businesses would result in a loss of employment for those currently engaged in the business. The survey results indicated that there is a significant proportion of family employment in the village, therefore any business closures would be likely to have a significant impact on such a small community.

Safety

- There are no negative impacts with regards to safety for the residents of Johns River.

Provisions of Goods and Services

- Potential change in affordability of and access to goods and services if local business closures occur following construction of a bypass. Local residents may have to travel to regional centres for day to day shopping. Whilst there may be savings in the price of goods and services by shopping in major centres (Port Macquarie and Taree), the loss of convenience shopping and increased vehicle running and maintenance costs would be incurred.

Community Facilities

- A negative effect on the community market at Johns River, which benefits from passing trade given its good exposure to the existing Pacific Highway has been identified above. The profits from these markets assist in maintaining the Community Hall and adjacent recreation reserve, which are the main community facilities in Johns River. Consequently, if profit levels fall, the current level of maintenance of the Hall may be unlikely to be sustained unless funds are provided from another source.

4.3

LAKE SECTION

North of Johns River to south of Kew, the proposed upgrade includes an additional carriageway generally located immediately west of the existing highway. A new crossing of the Camden Haven River immediately west of the existing bridge is also proposed.

4.3.1

Positive Impacts

The likely positive impacts associated with this section are:

Agriculture

- New culverts and associated drainage improvements to the north of the Camden Haven River would provide additional flood relief as well as improving the drainage of a waterlogged area on the west side of the Highway. One cell of the proposed twin box culvert would also be increased in size to 3.3 metres wide x 2.4 metres high to provide a safe underpass crossing point for stock movement.

Business Effects

- The operation of businesses located along this section (Paragliding, Camden Haven Airfield and farms) would generally be unaffected by the Highway upgrade as existing access would be generally maintained and land acquisition would be of a very minor nature.

Safety

- Improved safety especially for ingress and egress at intersections with local roads.

4.3.2

Negative Impacts

The following negative impacts for the Lake Section have been identified:

Property Impacts

- Acquisition of land adjacent to the western side of the existing highway would reduce the area of some holdings (generally a marginal reduction) and would result in a reduced setback to the highway for some dwellings

Access

- Left in and left out only turns at some intersections which currently provide for all turning directions including Bulleys Road – north, Middle Brother Road, Haydons Road, Charles Yard Road and Sunnyvale Road. This would have some adverse impacts on traffic convenience for local residents and their visitors. Traffic counts at these junctions indicate relatively minor volumes now and in the future.

Amenity

- Decreased amenity (especially in relation to traffic noise exposure) may result for residents where land acquisitions affect the distance between the highway and dwelling.

4.4

KEW

The preferred option is the construction of a bypass located approximately 300 metres to the east of the existing township with a grade-separated intersection at Ocean Drive catering for southbound movements to and from Kew and areas east and west of Kew. Northbound traffic would use the existing Highway through Kew to access Kendall to the west and Laurieton and other areas to the east.

4.4.1

Positive impacts

The following positive impacts for Kew have been identified.

Residential Amenity

- Reduced traffic volumes and noise levels in the village of Kew as a result of the bypass would improve amenity for residents in the village and allow urban and landscape improvements to be undertaken along the former Highway.
- Improved amenity for residential areas and the recent reticulation of sewerage facilities may increase the desirability of Kew as a place to live.

Business Effects

- Additional residential development in the area, which may occur as a result of an improvement to residential amenity resulting from the highway bypass, may have a positive impact on existing business. The operators of five businesses noted that new residential development in the area during the last couple of years has had a positive effect on their businesses.
- The operators of two businesses, the Camden Haven Golf Club and the veterinary clinic, considered that these businesses might experience a small increase in business as a result of the bypass. In addition, the operator of the Royal Hotel has recently undertaken substantial improvements to this property and apparently does not consider that the Highway bypass would adversely affect this business. The Hotel operator has indicated that travellers occupy an average of six rooms per night. The operator advises that the bypass may result in some staff restructuring but is unlikely to affect the viability of the business.
- There is likely to be some short-term positive economic effect due to increased patronage of local businesses during construction of the highway upgrade.

Safety

- Improved safety for local residents living immediately adjacent to the existing Pacific Highway
- As the township would no longer be severed by a major highway, pedestrian, cycle and vehicular movement on local roads throughout the area would be more convenient and safer, particularly for children catching buses to schools in the Camden Haven area and Kendall.
- Improved safety for vehicles gaining ingress to and egress from the entire length of the realigned highway as a result of the incorporation of higher standard intersections and filtering lanes into the highway design.

4.4.2

Negative Impacts

The following negative social and economic impacts have been identified for Kew:

Property

- The bypass would pass through rural residential lots to the south of Kew including six lots in the Glen Haven estate. The bypass would also sever

properties located to the north of the Glen Haven estate. These include part of the Lake Ridge Estate where an estimated five of the approved but not yet released blocks would be affected.

- Two houses would be lost. These are located in Bellbird Close and Bethesda Road to the north and south of Glen Haven Estate respectively.

Residential Amenity

- There is likely to be an impact on residential amenity particularly for the residents of large lot residential properties in the Glen Haven Estate. This would be due to increased traffic noise, vehicular air emissions and visual impact due to the relocation of the Highway to the east of Kew.

Business impacts

- The business survey was responded to by 14 businesses out of a total of 22 businesses in Kew. A total of 18 business types were recorded. Businesses in Kew primarily relate to the function of the town as a highway service centre. There are four service stations, two take away food shops, two café/restaurants plus businesses catering primarily for local needs. These businesses employ a total of 37 full time and 25 part time staff. Over one third of the staff are family members of the business owner/operator.
- Highway service trade was the most important source of customers for five of the 14 respondent businesses. A reduction in this trade would have a significant negative economic impact on these businesses and on their employees.
- The operators of four businesses including two service stations, one restaurant/cafe and the Kew Visitor Information Centre thought that these businesses would close as a result of the bypass.
- The operators of five businesses thought that there would be a decrease in turnover and customers varying from between 5% and 85% to 90%. The operators of two of the service stations predicted the greatest impact on business turnover.
- The high level of employment of family members who live locally creates the potential for substantial negative flow-on to the local community as a result of negative impacts on the business sector.
- The Kew Court Motel along with the Royal Hotel both provide overnight accommodation for travellers. In previous discussions, the motel operator indicated that closure was considered inevitable as a result of the bypass (although the present level of occupancy is unknown).

Provisions of Goods and Services

- Potential change in affordability of and access to goods and services if local business closures occur following construction of a bypass. Local residents may have to travel to regional centres for day to day shopping. Whilst there may be savings in the price of goods and services by shopping in major centres (Port Macquarie and Taree), the loss of convenience shopping and increased vehicle running and maintenance costs would be incurred.

4.5 *KEW TO HERONS CREEK*

This section of the preferred option would link the Kew bypass to the existing dual carriageway at Bobs Creek Road. A new carriageway would be constructed in an expanded road reserve.

4.5.1 *Positive Impacts*

Business

- Boral Timbers has indicated that improvements to the highway would have a positive impact to this business.

Safety

- Improved safety especially for ingress and egress at intersections including vehicular access to the Herons Creek Primary School.

4.5.2 *Negative impacts*

Property

- 24 properties would be affected by acquisition of land – generally only a relatively small area and thus a small proportion of the total property
- Two dwelling houses - one to the south of Herons Creek Road on the eastern side of the highway and one to the north, on the western side of the highway, would be lost.

Residential Amenity

- There are likely to be some minor impacts to residential amenity caused by the decreased setback from the highway to some dwellings and related increase in traffic noise.

4.6 *SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

Based on the above, a summary of potential social and economic impacts of the highway upgrade is contained in *Table 4.1*

In some circumstances both a minor and a major impact have been indicated and explained. This is due to the perceived level of impact identified by the community and is largely determined by the proximity of residents to the proposed upgraded Highway. Any loss of dwelling houses is considered to be a major social impact.

The major negative economic impacts are related to the impacts on businesses in Johns River and Kew.

Potential impacts of the highway upgrade on tourism in the Camden Haven are discussed *Section 5*.

Potential mitigation measures for the adverse social and economic impacts are discussed in *Section 6*.

4.6.1 Preferred Option – Johns River

Table 4.1 Preferred Option - Perceived Social Impacts

Impact	Perceived Level of Impact			
	Positive		Negative	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Property Impacts				
• House acquisition	None	None	None	None
• Relocation of residents	None	None	None	None
• Severance of properties			3	3
Residential Amenity				
• Changes to amenity	3 For residence directly abutting the former Highway	3 for other residence in Johns River	3 for residences directly abutting the proposed Highway bypass	3 for residences close to but not directly abutting the proposed Highway bypass
Access				
• Changes to local traffic circulation	3			
• Accessibility to regional centres		3 Overall saving in travel times		3 Minor inconvenience due to changes in local access.
Business Effects				
• Economic Performance/employment levels		4 During construction	3 Post construction	3
Safety				
• School children safety	3 Improved safety for children accessing Johns River School			

• Pedestrian safety	3	Improved safety, as a result of the Highway relocating out of town centre			
• Local/property access	3	Increased safety for residents living adjacent to existing Highway			
• General highway egress/ingress	3	Incorporation of higher standard intersection			
Provision of Goods and Services					
• Affordability and access					3
• Provision of NRMA services	Unchanged	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Community/Recreation Facilities					
• Camden Haven High School	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
• Johns River Community Hall					3
• Johns River Tavern					3
Road User Benefits					
• Fuel efficiency	3	Higher standard road condition, less travel time and distance			
• Improved travel times	3				

4.6.2 Preferred Option –Lake Section

Table 4.2 Preferred Option - Perceived Social Impacts

Impact	Perceived Level of Impact			
	Positive		Negative	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Property Impacts				
• House acquisition	n/a	N/a	n/a	n/a
• Relocation of residents	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
• Severance of properties				3
Residential Amenity				
• Changes to amenity				3 reduced distance between proposed highway and dwellings
Access				
• Changes to local traffic circulation				3 Decrease in traffic convenience for local residents due to left in and left out in intersections
• Accessibility to regional centres	3	3	3	3
Business Effects				
• Economic Performance/employment levels	unchanged	unchanged	unchanged	unchanged
Safety				
• School children safety		3 Increased safety for access		
• Pedestrian safety	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
• Local/property access	3 Better access for properties			

Impact	Perceived Level of Impact			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General highway egress/ingress 	3 Improved safety			3
Provision of Goods and Services				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordability and access 	Unchanged	unchanged	unchanged	unchanged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of NRMA services 	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Community Facilities				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camden Haven High School 	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johns River Community Hall 	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johns River Tavern 	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Road User Benefits				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuel efficiency 	3 Reduced travel times and distance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved travel times 	3			

4.6.3 Preferred Option – Kew Section

Table 4.3 Preferred Option - Perceived Social Impacts

Impact	Perceived Level of Impact			
	Positive		Negative	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Property Impacts				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House acquisition Relocation of residents Severance of properties 			loss of 2 dwellings 3 3 5 lots would be affected in Lake Ridge Estate	
Residential Amenity				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to amenity 	3 Reduced traffic noise and volume in Kew	3	3 Decreased distance from highway to dwellings. Increased traffic noise, emissions, and reduced visual amenity	3 Increase traffic noise and emissions
Access				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to local traffic circulation Accessibility to regional centres 	3 Relates to traffic circulation and volumes	3 Overall saving in travel time		3 Inconvenience due to changes in local access
Business Effects				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Performance 			3 Significant impact on five businesses resulting from the relocation of the highway	3 May result in negative flow on effects to the wider community resulting from economic hardship from the closure of businesses

Impact	Perceived Level of Impact			
Safety				
• School children safety	3			
• Pedestrian safety	3 improved safety, as a result of Highway relocating out of the town centre			
• Local/property access	3 Improved safety for residents living adjacent to existing Highway			
• General highway egress/ingress	3 Higher standard intersection would result in improved safety			
Provision of Goods and Services				
• Affordability and access				3 Potential loss of businesses in the area and a reduction in choice.
• Provision of NRMA services				3
Community Facilities				
• Camden Haven High School	unchanged	unchanged	unchanged	unchanged
• Camden Haven Golf Club	unchanged	unchanged	unchanged	unchanged
Road User Benefits				
• Fuel efficiency	3 Reduction in travel times and distance travelled			
• Improved travel times	3			

4.6.4 Preferred Option - Kew to Herons Creek Section

Table 4.4 Preferred Option - Perceived Social Impacts

Impact	Perceived Level of Impact			
	Positive		Negative	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Property Impacts				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House acquisition Relocation of residents 			loss of 2 dwellings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severance of properties 			3 Acquisitions of land from 24 land holdings	3
Residential Amenity				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to amenity 				3 Decreased setback to Highway, and increased traffic noise
Access				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to traffic circulation 				3 inconvenience due to changes in local access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility to regional centres 		3		
Business Effects				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Performance/employment levels 		3 for businesses such as Herons Creek Timber		
Safety				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School children safety 		3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian safety 	Unchanged	Unchanged	Unchanged	Unchanged

Impact	Perceived Level of Impact			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/property access 		3 improved access for properties on existing highway alignment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General highway egress/ingress 	3 Higher standard of intersections			3
Provision of Goods and Services				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordability and access 		3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of NRMA services 	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Community Facilities				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hérons Creek Primary School 		4 improved vehicular access		4 land loss
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camden Haven High School 	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Road User Benefits				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuel efficiency 	3 Reduced travel times and distance travelled			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved travel times 	3			

*5.1**OVERVIEW*

The purpose of this section of the report is to consider the impact of the upgrading of the Pacific Highway, including the bypass of Kew tourism facilities and generators in the Camden Haven area.

This section addresses the following issues:

- Definition of the Camden Haven Tourist Area
- Identification of accommodation and tourist facilities within the region.
- Visitation patterns
- Assessment of the likely direction/growth of tourism in the area
- Impact of the preferred bypass option on tourism in the area and
- preliminary consideration of mitigation measures.

This section of the report has been compiled using the following sources of information:

- Data from Hastings Council and the Kew Visitor Information Centre (VIC)
- Discussion with selected Tourism Operators in the Camden Haven
- Discussion with Hastings Council's Economic Development Officer and Tourism Officer at the Kew VIC.
- Tourism Manager, Hastings Council
- Tourism NSW North Coast tourism profile December 2001 and Regional research review) October 2002.
- ABS tourism statistics
- Various surveys of tourism in the region. These are discussed below

It is noted that whilst regional data is available from the ABS and Tourism NSW there is no break down of data to the local level. Regional data has been used to assess tourism trends in the region.

*5.2**THE CAMDEN HAVEN TOURISM AREA*

The Camden Haven tourism area is defined by tourism operators as the area within the catchment of the Camden Haven River. This includes the coastal towns of Bonny Hills, Laurieton, North Haven and Dunbogan, the inland towns of Kew, Kendall and Comboyne and the rural hinterland.

For the majority of tourist facilities and accommodation in the Camden Haven, Kew is the point of exit from the Pacific Highway for travellers in either direction but predominantly northbound.

The preferred bypass option requires all northbound traffic travelling to the Camden Haven to travel through Kew. Southbound traffic travelling east to the coastal areas of the Camden Haven would bypass Kew, and other traffic travelling west would travel via Kew along Ocean Drive and Kendall Road.

5.3 *TOURISM IN THE CAMDEN HAVEN*

5.3.1 *Importance of tourism to the area and the wider region*

Statistics for tourist bed nights and expenditure are available only for the Mid North Coast region which extends from the Great Lakes Council Area in the south to the Kempsey Shire in the north (and includes the Moorland to Herons Creek project area). These figures compiled by the ABS indicate that, after Sydney, the highest visitor expenditure regions in NSW are the South Coast, Hunter and Mid North Coast. The Mid North Coast is ranked 12th overall in Australia in terms of visitor expenditure. Tourism NSW has identified that the Mid North Coast Region (Nelson Bay to Coffs Harbour) received 2.5 million overnight domestic visitors in the year ending December 2001, 93% of visitors are domestic. Whilst these figures are regionally based they do illustrate the importance of tourism to the economy of the Mid North Coast and the centres in the region

There are very few tourism statistics and indicators available for the Camden Haven area. A number of surveys have been conducted and some of these are referred to below. These give an indication of tourism patterns within the Hastings and Camden Haven region but are based on relatively small samples so the results should be regarded with some caution.

A list of accommodation and tourist facilities in the Camden Haven area has been compiled using information from the Kew VIC. *Table 5.1* indicates the accommodation facilities and number of rooms / units available. It is estimated that there are over 500 beds available in the area. In addition to the facilities listed, there are three real estate agents with holiday lettings listed for 87 properties. There are also a substantial number of tourists to the area who stay with friends and relatives. A survey conducted on behalf of Hastings Council by Insight Marketing Research between 1999 and 2000 found that there is a significant level of visitation by family and friends. 71% of those residents surveyed in the Camden Haven had visits from friends and relatives during the previous 12 months. Private houses therefore are also a significant provider of holiday and tourist accommodation.

Table 5.1 Accommodation in the Camden Haven

Bed and Breakfast	No. Rooms	Holiday Units	No. units
Dunbogan	3	Boat-O-Tell	13
Kendall Green	2	Japana Holiday units	17
Kookaburras	2	Utopia Holiday Units	4
Mendip Lodge Gardens	2	Sundial Holiday Inn	5
Seaview	4	Sub-total	39
Wirrabarra	3	Motels/Hotels	No. rooms
Teloepa	2	Country Pines Resort Motel	10
Sub-total	18	Laurieton Hotel Motel	7
Caravan Parks	No. cabins	Mariner	12
Beachfront	3	Surfside Resort Motel	15
Bonny Hills	2	Woongarra Motel	16
Brigadoon	24	North Haven	6
Christmas Cove	10	Kew Court	13
Diamond Waters	5	Royal Hotel at Kew	6
Dunbogan	9	Haven Waters Motel and suites	21
Jacaranda	18	Sub-total	106
Laurieton Gardens	16	Real Estate Agents	No. units
Rainbow Beach Holiday Village	41	Nationwide Reality	18
The Haven	8	Raine and Horne Laurieton	60
Sub-total	136	Ray White R/E Laurieton	9
Country Retreats	No. Rooms	Sub-total	87
Comboyne Hideaway	9		
Sub-total	9		
Total		395	

The following tourist attraction and facilities in the Camden Haven region are listed by category:

- Craft / galleries**
- Kendall Craft (Kendall Railway Station)
 - Kendall Cottage
 - Crafty Shoes, Kendall
 - Alliopy's Gallery, Kendall
 - Haven Scent, North Haven
 - Banksia Grove Gallery
 - Kookaburra Ridge Gallery
 - Creations Voice Studio Gallery

Rural produce	Norfolk Punch Lorne Valley Macadamia Farm Barbushco Bush Foods Long Point Vineyard
Coffee shops /restaurants	Relish on the River Mendip Lodge Gardens Udder Cow Cafe
Recreation facilities	High Adventure Air Park Coastal Skydivers, Kendall A Total Adventure, Laurieton Scuba Haven Canopus Deep Sea Fishing Haven-Lee Cruises Diamond Head - Crowdy Bay National Park (kangaroos) Laurieton Plaza Theatre Camden Haven Tours Dunbogan Boatshed and Marina
Licensed Clubs	Laurieton United Servicemen's Club Camden Haven Golf/Bowls Club Kendall Services & Citizens' Club North Haven Bowling Club Bonny Hills Youth and Conference Centre

Tourist facilities in the Camden Haven are low key operations providing a range of gallery and rural orientated businesses in addition to some family based recreation activities. Overall the facilities appear to be aimed at the mature-aged tourist.

5.4 *VISITATION PATTERNS*

This section seeks to quantify some characteristics of tourists to the Camden Haven and their habits in terms of mode of travel, length of stay, how (or whether) bookings are made and, importantly, whether the decision to visit the Camden Haven was made prior to arriving in the region. There is limited information that relates only to the Camden Haven. In compiling this section the following information was used:

- Roy Morgan Research (Dec 2002) Market Profiling Report North Coast
- Insight Market Research Hastings Local Government Area
- Kew VIC data regarding centre visitation.
- Data from Tourism NSW (regionally based data)

5.4.1 *Source of visitors*

The Roy Morgan research indicates that 75% of visitors to the North Coast come from Sydney and Insight Research indicates that over 50% of visitors to friends and relatives come from the Hunter and Sydney. Whilst there are discrepancies in these figures due to the differing size and boundaries of

samples, they indicate that the majority of visitors to the region are coming from the south, particularly Sydney and the Hunter Valley.

Typically visitors are over 35 years of age or families with young children.

5.4.2 *Mode of Transport / Length of stay*

The Roy Morgan research indicates that visitors typically travel to the region by car. Research also suggests that most visitations to the mid north coast are short stay, between 1 and 3 days. This is supported by Tourism NSW data that indicates that 91% of visitors travel to the North Coast region by car. This finding indicates the importance of a high standard of regional and local accessibility by road especially the role of the Pacific Highway.

5.4.3 *Timing of Travel*

Data from Tourism NSW indicates that the most popular time for visiting the North Coast is January (16% of visitors), followed by April (11%) with March being the time of lowest visitation(5%). This finding indicates that school and other holiday periods attract high visitor levels, as reflected in the traffic data (Ove Arup and Partners 2003)

5.4.4 *Mode of Booking*

Insight Research conducted a survey on behalf of Metro Advertising to determine the level of pre-booking of accommodation in the Hastings generally in order to assess the importance of highway billboard advertising of tourist facilities. This survey indicated that during peak season 65% of visitor's pre-book accommodation and while 35% have no bookings. At other times, outside school holiday periods the survey indicated that the figures are reversed i.e.. The proportion of travellers without a booking was 65% and while 35% of travellers have pre booked accommodation. Discussion with tourist operators in the Camden Haven (the 5 motels in the area and one caravan park) indicates that pre booking in the Camden Haven would be significantly higher than market research suggests. The reason for this may relate to the relatively limited amount of accommodation available in the Camden Haven compared to the wider choice of accommodation available in Port Macquarie. Discussion with the largest holiday letting agent in the Camden Haven indicates that during school holidays virtually all accommodation is pre booked whereas out of the holidays approximately 25% of accommodation lettings would be 'walk in'.

Whilst these figures are not conclusive, they indicate that a large proportion of visitors, particularly in the school holidays, have already made a decision to visit the Camden Haven prior to arriving at Kew. Outside the main tourist times, the number of visitors who have a pre determined destination in the Camden Haven is more difficult to ascertain.

There are no figures available regarding occupancies/utilisation of accommodation in holiday/non holiday periods.

In terms of booking methods, one operator suggests that the NRMA guide and the Internet are both important media. One tourist operator, the

Christmas Cove Caravan Park, surveys all visitors to determine how they found this Caravan Park. Results indicate that the main sources of information are the NRMA guide and the Internet. Use of the Internet for holiday research and bookings is increasing, according to this operator.

5.4.5 *Role of the Kew Visitor Information Centre*

Discussion with personnel at the Kew VIC indicates that its primary role is to promote the Camden Haven. Its current location on the Pacific Highway is considered ideally suited to this promotion role. It is understood that the centre's roles are:

- To promote the alternative route to Port Macquarie via the Coast Road. This is important, as visitors passing through the area may make a return visit for a longer period.
- To provide advice on accommodation options in the area and make bookings on behalf of travellers
- To provide advice to people already on holiday in the area. There is no visitor information centre in Laurieton or North Haven. Holiday makers visit the centre to seek information on attractions in the area.

Visitor counts at the Kew and Port Macquarie VIC are presented in *Table 5.2* below.

Table 5.2 *Visitors to port Macquarie and Kew VIC*

Year	No of visitors Kew VIC	Port Macquarie VIC
1998	19,487	193,142
1999	9,032	173,701
2000	26,800	140,561
2001	31,415	143,390
2002	31,747	150,265

Source: Kew VIC & Port Macquarie VIC

Note: These figures are based on an automated door counting system

The peak in 1998 followed by a trough and rise in visitation at both centres are, according to the manager, Port Macquarie VIC, consistent with NSW tourism trends. In regards to Kew, the figures indicate that in both 2001 and 2002, an average of 600 people a week visited the centre. NSW Tourism statistics indicate that during 2001 there were approximately 2.5 million overnight visitors to the North Coast and 91% travelled by car. The visitation figures suggest that 1.3% of these stopped at the Kew VIC.

These counts indicate that an increasing number of visitors are using the Kew VIC. This is consistent with NSW trends (as mentioned above). The manager of the Port Macquarie VIC advises that the centre plays an important role as a “gateway” to the “Greater Port Macquarie Region” and plays an important role in encouraging people to stop and visit the Camden Haven and Hastings generally.

It is noted that there is a growing proportion of international visitors using the VIC. No comprehensive figures are available but Tourism NSW figures

indicate that international tourists account for 5% of visitor nights to the North Coast Region. The number of visitors and visitor nights is increasing (140,000 visitors in 1999 increasing to 153,000 visitors in 2000). The north coast is the second ranking region for overseas visitors (outside Sydney). It is reasonable to assume that visitation to the Camden Haven follows similar trends.

Although it is clear that the VIC provides a facility used by both tourists holidaying in the Camden Haven and those passing through the area, it is not possible to quantify the value of the VIC to tourism in the Camden Haven.

5.5

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR TOURISM IN THE CAMDEN HAVEN

Discussion with tourist operators in the Camden Haven and the Kew VIC predict that tourism in the area will continue to grow and that currently some changes are taking place. A number of motels in Laurieton and North Haven are currently being refurbished and caravan parks are replacing on-site vans with cabin accommodation. Bed and breakfast accommodation continues to expand but the market is likely to remain relatively small due to the comparatively higher cost of this type of accommodation. Well designed web sites for individual facilities are considered to be important as there is an increasing use of the Internet for accommodation bookings and holiday research.

Similar changes to accommodation facilities are occurring in other coastal centres as tourists are moving to more frequent, shorter breaks and demanding a higher standard of accommodation.

Tourism in the Camden Haven tends to rely upon the natural attractions of the area and tourist attractions, including tours, rural produce and craft galleries relating to that theme.

5.6

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED HIGHWAY UPGRADE ON TOURISM

The information available indicated the following key factors that are relevant to assessing the impact of the Kew bypass on tourism in the Camden Haven area:

- The Camden Haven area includes all the catchment of the Camden Haven River plus Bonny Hills to the north. The towns of North Haven, Dunbogan, Laurieton, Kew, Kendall and Comboyne plus the rural hinterland are included in the area.
- Kew is the major point of exit from the Pacific Highway for tourists to the Camden Haven with Ocean Drive/Kendall Road being the major local access route.
- The majority of visitors to the area arrive from Sydney and the south of NSW, by car for short visits
- During school holidays most visitors' pre-book accommodation. Outside the holiday periods there is a greater number of visitors who do not have pre-booked accommodation, however there are no statistics available. Some of the visitors who do not have a pre-booking may not have made a decision to visit the Camden Haven prior to arrival in the area.

- Some existing tourist accommodation is being refurbished including upgrades to motels and the installation of cabins to replace on-site vans in caravan parks.
- The manager of the VIC in Port Macquarie considers that the Kew VIC has an important role as a gateway to the Greater Port Macquarie area and to promote Camden Haven and encourage tourists to take the scenic route through to Port Macquarie. It provides tourist information to visitors already holidaying in the area and takes holiday bookings over the counter. Statistics show that the use of the centre by visitors is increasing. As stated above, it is not possible to quantify the value of the VIC at Kew.
- As the majority of visitors to the region arrive from the south, the majority of visitors who have the Camden Haven as predetermined destination are still likely to pass through Kew and pass the VIC when the bypass is completed.

The Pacific Highway upgrade and bypass of Kew is likely to have the following impacts on tourism in the Camden Haven area:

Positive Impacts

- The continued upgrading of the Pacific Highway and the consequent reduction in driving time from Sydney and the Hunter Valley would reduce driver stress and fatigue. This would have positive impacts on tourism to the area and is likely to encourage further short-term visitation. Although there are no figures available, the manager of the Port Macquarie VIC advises that current trends indicate that people are taking shorter holidays. The Camden Haven is four hours driving time from Sydney and two and half hours from Newcastle, which makes it very accessible for weekend visitation.
- Removal of through traffic from Kew would allow upgrading of the former Highway and opportunities for the development of new tourist related businesses as occurred in other bypassed towns where the amenity substantially improves.

Negative Impacts

- Potential visitors to the Camden Haven who have not already made a decision to visit the region may be lost to the area as they would not directly pass the tourist information office.
- A reduction in visitation to the Kew VIC may impact on visitation to tourist accommodation and facilities in the area.
- A reduced visitation to the VIC may have a wider impact due to the current role of the centre in redirecting traffic via the Camden Haven to Port Macquarie. However there are no figures to support this.

6.1

MITIGATION MEASURES

There are a number of options for mitigation of the potential social and economic negative impacts of the project. The responsibility for these actions rests with a number of agencies, and it is considered that a coordinated approach would be required, both concurrent to and subsequent to construction of the proposed highway upgrade.

The following measures are submitted for consideration as means to alleviate some of the negative impacts of the proposal on the township of Kew in particular. The recommended mitigation measures have been categorised with reference to the agency that would be primarily responsible for the action.

Mitigation measures that can be addressed by the RTA are:

Construction Period

- Noise mitigation and environmental controls on construction activity would assist in alleviating some of the adverse impacts associated with loss of amenity during the construction phase. This would be done as part of specific mitigation measures in Noise and Air Quality reports (see *Ove Arup and Partners Upgrade of the Pacific Highway Noise Report (2003)* and *Ove Arup and Partners Upgrade of the Pacific Highway Air Quality Report (2003)*).

Tourism

- the provision of advance signage on the Highway about tourist information available in Kew and the Camden Haven in accordance with RTA signage policy
- Promotion of Kew as a rest stop and “gateway to the Camden Haven”
- Relocation of the RTA rest stops from Fernbank Creek to Kew (adjacent to VIC). This would need to be done in conjunction with Council

Community

- Subject to compliance with RTA signage policy, provision of highway signage for the community markets at Johns River.
- On going consultation with affected residents after project approval and during project construction.

Mitigation measures that are recommend for investigation by Council:

- improved and coordinated signposting of the Camden Haven and Kew for both north and south bound traffic;
- improved promotion of the Camden Haven area at the Port Macquarie VIC, and through promotional strategies;
- review and redefine the role of the Kew VIC including possible use as a coach stop and RTA rest stop (see below);

- Promotion of Kew as the “Gateway” to the Camden Haven and Greater Port Macquarie;
- Development of a Townscape plan including, for example, a narrowing of the current highway road pavement, street landscaping and building controls (e.g. to create a theme). This option would need further investigation and consultation with the community and options for funding improvements on public land would need to be investigated. If successfully implemented this option could have medium to long term benefits to the village through the revival of the village and the creation of new business opportunities associated with tourism, residential development in the locality and tourism.

Mitigation measures that are recommended for investigation by the community (including residents, tourism operators and business owners/operators) in conjunction with Council:

- During the period leading up to construction and operation (a minimum of perhaps 5 years), there is the opportunity for businesses individually and collectively to consider their future roles in a different operating environment. This process has already commenced in both Johns River and Kew with the assistance/involvement of the RTA and Councils.
- Increasing the number of tourists to the area who pre-book their holiday in the region. This can be assisted through better promotion of the Camden Haven area.

It is not possible to mitigate all the likely negative impacts of the proposed highway bypass of Kew and, as stated above, it is very likely that some businesses with a high dependence on highway-related traffic would close as a result of the bypass .

It is noted that the relative close proximity of Kew to the bypass makes it a good candidate as a highway service town. *EP&A ACT, 1979, Direction under Section 117(2) No. S28* for commercial/retail development along the Pacific Highway, North Coast, from the Queensland Border to Hexham, identifies objectives and principles that councils listed in Schedule 1 of this direction need to consider. The direction applies when a council listed in Schedule 1 prepares a draft local environmental plan for land in the vicinity of the existing and/or proposed alignment of the Pacific Highway. Greater Taree City Council and Hastings Council are listed in Schedule 1. Therefore these councils need to consider the following objectives when preparing a local environmental plan for towns along the pacific highway. The objectives are:

- Objective 1: To recognise that the Pacific Highway's function is to operate as the North Coast's primary inter-and intra-regional road traffic route. That is, the purpose of the Pacific Highway is regional transport, not retailing;*
- Objective 2: To recognise and protect the very large public expenditure being invested in the Pacific Highway; specifically, to limit the need for future public expenditure (eg: further by-passes) to overcome new ribbon development;*

Objective 3: To prevent, and as opportunities arise to reverse, the losses in highway safety and highway efficiency caused by incremental additions of out-of-town or town fringe retail/commercial development fronting the highway;

Objective 4: To provide the food, vehicle service and rest needs of travellers on the highway;

Objective 5: To achieve Objective 4 in such a way that the role of highway service centres is differentiated from the role of commercial areas in town; and

Objective 6: To prevent retail/commercial foci of towns from shifting from town centre areas (where they can best serve the populations of the towns) to highway orientated sites.

Greater Taree City Council and Hastings Council are not currently preparing local environmental plans for the townships located on the Pacific Highway. However, if Hastings Council or Greater Taree City Council prepare a draft local environmental plan in the future, the above listed objectives and principles contained in the Direction would need to be considered.

Johns River, on the other hand, is much smaller and currently does not have the infrastructure or extent of highway-related business to become a highway service town.

6.2

CONCLUSION

The report identifies a number of positive and negative social and economic impacts associated with the proposed highway upgrade. The most significant positive impacts are associated with the improved amenity and safety that would be enjoyed by the residents and visitors to Kew and Johns River. On the other hand there would be significant negative impacts associated with the removal of through traffic from the villages.

Whilst some amelioration measures are recommended, based on experience of other small towns that have been bypassed, it is not possible to ameliorate all the impacts associated with loss of business and it is likely that some businesses with a high level of dependence on highway-related traffic would close. Recommended actions for townscape improvements and the promotion of Kew, as a highway service town, would be likely to have some positive medium to long term community benefits.

The report also considers the impact of the Kew bypass on tourism in the Camden Haven and visitation to the Kew Visitor Information Centre. Positive impacts are identified, in particular the reduced travelling time from Sydney and the Hunter Valley, which are likely to encourage further short-term visitation to the area. There is some concern that potential visitors to the region may be lost as they would be no longer directly passing the Kew VIC and the information service that it provides..

The report recommends a co-ordinated response to tourism by the Council in conjunction with the community and the RTA. This could include improved promotion of the Camden Haven with additional and more effective highway advertising and changes to the role of the VIC as a coach stop and rest stop.

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