



## **The Hon Michael McCormack MP**

Deputy Prime Minister

Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development

Leader of The Nationals

Federal Member for Riverina

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### **TRANSCRIPT**

#### **COFFS HARBOUR PACIFIC HIGHWAY BYPASS PROJECT PREDESIGN LAUNCH**

**24 September 2018**

#### **E&OE**

**Subjects:** Coffs Harbour Pacific Highway Project Predesign Launch

#### **John Alexander:**

Hi, I am John Alexander – the Director Maritime Services in the Northern Region, based in Grafton. Before we get started I'd just like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land you're standing on here today, the Gumbaynggirr people, and pass on my respects to elders past and present and any Aboriginal people who are here today. We have a number of guests here today, Deputy Prime Minister, Michael McCormack: Luke Hartsuyker, our local federal MP; our own Minister, Minister Pavey, Ken Kanofski the Chief Executive of Roads and Maritime Services. We have an apology from Andrew Fraser, and we have our Project Manager, Adam Cameron here as well. Today is a big day for the people of Coffs Harbour. I noticed it stopped raining, so that's something I suppose about this morning. It's a big day for the people of Coffs Harbour, the people of New South Wales, and also the people of the country given the size of this project. So I'd like to kick off proceedings by asking Luke to say a few words.

#### **LUKE HARTSUYKER:**

Thank you and it's a pleasure to have the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Michael McCormack and the State Roads Minister Melinda Pavey here in the electorate today on what is a very good day for this project, a great day for this project - moving towards getting the trucks out of the main street. It's a vitally important project for Coffs Harbour. Everyone out on the street is saying we want to get this job done just as quickly as possible and that's what we're about today with the draft concept design which we will be launching here today. This is the most expensive part of the Pacific Highway Project, running at a cost of almost \$100 million a kilometre. This is massively expensive infrastructure, running at about three times the cost of the Glenugie to Ballina project. It's a huge investment in Coffs Harbour. People want the trucks out of the main street, that's why we're here today, and I'd like to hand over to Deputy Prime Minister McCormack to say a few words.

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The Hon Michael McCormack MP

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**MICHAEL MCCORMACK:**

Well thank you very much Luke and this launch today of the preferred design concept is really, really important and there'll be drop-in sessions at the Coffs Harbour Golf Club this Thursday and October 13 and 18, and have a look online on the Roads and Maritime Services website, have a look at the RMS website so that you too as a member of the community can have input, have a look, and have a say on the alignment. But the fact is it's going ahead: \$971 million of Federal money in conjunction with the money that the State Government has put up, and it's fantastic that Roads Minister Melinda Pavey is here today. I know how hard she's fought for this project. I know how hard Luke Hartsuyker and Kevin Hogan have fought, as well as Andrew Fraser, the State Member for Coffs Harbour. This is an important day; it's another step along the way to getting the trucks out of the central business district, out of the urban area of Coffs Harbour. It's important, it's necessary, and it's happening. It's getting built thanks to the Nationals in Government. This is what we do when we're in Government with the Liberals. These are the outcomes we achieve. Certainly through the State Government, through the Berejiklian and Barilaro Government, and certainly with the Federal Government, we're making things happen.

We're getting trucks out of Coffs Harbour CBD. We're getting this road finished, this duplication. It's an important day and I urge and encourage members of the public to take part in the drop-in sessions as well as to have a look on the RMS website to see exactly what's happening. The EIS will be out, will be done in December and then in 2020, work will begin after the much-detailed design and everything else happens in 2020, and I look forward to coming back. I look forward to coming back, to seeing this road duplicated. I know it's been something the community has asked for, demanded, expected, and deserved for decades. It's now happening. Melinda.

**MELINDA PAVEY:**

Thank you very much, Deputy Prime Minister, to our Federal Member, Luke Hartsuyker, and also with us today is the CEO of Roads and Maritime Services, Ken Kanofski. I think having all these important players here today signify what an incredible project this will be and how important it is in the minds of the Federal and the State Government. It is something that I know that this community has begged and pleaded for for decades. There is a desire to get the trucks out of the main street of Coffs Harbour, and we are delivering that with this proposed design concept. Now, we still have a lot of community consultation to do and we'll be pleased to do that community consultation. When you are constructing a \$1.2 billion project, it's not without impact on a community but I understand that this community is sick of the noise of the trucks going through the main street, and the disruption, and the safety concerns. We need to separate local traffic with interstate traffic, and this is what this project will do. But we will continue to have conversations with the community, we have three public sessions organised at the Coffs Harbour Golf Club and that will feed into the process before we release the environmental impact statement at the end of the year. We will take into account noise mitigation - that will be very much a part of the work going forward over the next couple of months to show to the community that we are listening to what they have to say and we will show them that their concerns can be taken into account with this design.

It's also important to point out that there will still be two tunnel arrangements with this design and one cutting. We need to have that designed in that way so that we cannot have a too long a tunnel length – making dangerous goods trucks unable to go through and unable to use the bypass. That's at the forefront of our considerations.

I'd also like to acknowledge the point made by Luke Hartsuyker - this will be the most expensive part of the Pacific Highway upgrade. This is a vital link in that entire project. It is an important part of it at more than \$100 million a kilometre. It is a very expensive, gold plated option and I don't want people in this community to feel that they're being compromised at all. This is a wonderful option that delivers those outcomes of getting the trucks out of the main street. So, I'd like to open it up to questions for those attending and we'll talk further.

**JOURNALIST:**

Minister, Andrew Woodward, the Labor candidate, he's put out a release this morning trying to compare it to the WestConnex, to a toll road. There's no comparison, really.

**MELINDA PAVEY:**

I find it a unique comparison with wanting it to be a WestConnex project - very disingenuous, because the WestConnex project is a toll road. And I don't think the people of this community would accept the proposition that is being put out by the Labor candidate that we can compare this project with a toll road. The people of Coffs Harbour do not want a toll road. We need to be able to have a project that gets the trucks out of the main street and continues to grow and respect our community. And I do acknowledge that when you are building a project as big as this, on such a monumental scale, that it will have an impact. But we will do everything we can to minimise that impact with the dual purpose of getting the trucks out of the main street, keeping our communities as safe as possible and being able to ensure that this city has a future without trucks through the main street.

**JOURNALIST:**

When can we have a look at the plans for the cuttings and tunnels?

**MELINDA PAVEY:**

We will have documentation today that's available which will show what the design looks like and at Gatelys Road and at Roberts Hill there will be a land design bridge which is effectively a tunnel. That will then be the best impact for wildlife. We're very cognisant of the wildlife and also the Aboriginal heritage. As John Alexander said at the beginning this is very precious Gumbaynggirr country. We will work with all those stakeholders through the EIS. This is just the beginning of the work in terms of the communication with the public. We will continue to do what we need to do to get the best outcome, to get the best results that the general community want.

**JOURNALIST:**

So Minister, those two tunnels that you mentioned, will they be cut and cover construction?

**MELINDA PAVEY:**

Yes, they will be and I just think if there's any further technical aspect on that we can ask the CEO. But they are important. But the thing with those cut and cover tunnels is that they're at a shorter length. We have very strong rules in New South Wales and Australia about the amount and the length of a tunnel that dangerous goods can go through and we need to ensure that we don't limit dangerous goods going through our tunnel. We cannot have a situation where we limit the trucks being able to use the bypass. We want to ensure that the heavy vehicles, the dangerous goods use the bypass.

**JOURNALIST:**

Will it be noisy?

**MELINDA PAVEY:**

I think wherever you have traffic, wherever you have 27,000 vehicles expected by 2035, that there will be noise, but we will be putting in the noise bounds. We'll be doing the mitigation work. We'll be working with the homeowners for double glazing and all that type of activity. I mean there's a lot of communities now that suffer from the noise but we will do everything we can and we have proper rules and laws surrounding noise mitigation and we will continue to do that work with those communities. But I do urge people who are affected, don't be concerned, don't be alarmed. Please participate in the information sessions, the three that we've got organised. They're in the morning and the evening to ensure that we can get as many people as possible. Everyone needs to do their homework and their research on this. This is part of that process before we go into formal EIS. This is a great day. This is a great day that this community has fought so hard for and for so long. We don't want it to be undermined. We want them to have confidence that this is the most expensive part of the Pacific Highway duplication and who'd have thought we would actually have that duplication finished by 2020, then we're going to come back here and we're going to fix the mess that is the mainstream of Coffs Harbour.

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