



# Bonny Hills Progress Association INC.

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PO Box 44  
Bonny Hills 2445  
bhpa@bonnyhills.org.au

The General Manager  
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council  
PO Box 84  
Port Macquarie NSW 2444

## Re: PMHC Draft Bike Plan

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Council's Draft Bike Plan. The Bonny Hills Progress Association's submission is provided in two sections:

Section 1 is the result of inviting a local group of cycling enthusiasts to assist the BHPA by assembling their views on the draft plan and its suitability for meeting the needs of experienced local cyclists.

Section 2 provides additional comment by the BHPA particularly in relation to the needs of less experienced riders in the immediate vicinity and around Bonny Hills.

## Section 1

### Primary considerations

- What are the priority stages?  
For example, a continuous bike route from North Haven to Port Macquarie would, in our view, be a wonderful tourist draw card, particularly if much of it was separated from road traffic, and should therefore be considered as one of the first stages to be completed.

Linkage of safe walking / riding routes between home and school should also be a major priority.

Two classic examples in the Camden Haven and Bonny Hills / Lake Cathie areas stand out:

- there is no safe bike riding path for students from almost any direction to Camden Haven High School
- the timing of the construction of the new school opposite Houston Mitchell Drive, scheduled to open by 2015 before any houses have been built in the proposed "Area 14", will have it sitting out like the proverbial "shag on a rock". There are no "safe" walking or cycling tracks to or from that school to the homes of potential students in

Lake Cathie and Bonny Hills – off road access to the school site should be a priority and timed to coincide with the opening of the school – without it, the traffic congestion opposite the intersection at Houston Mitchell Drive will be dangerous. It should also be noted that the walking / cycle tracks to the school must be off road – no parent of a Primary school aged child will accept having their child ride along the side of such a busy traffic road, no matter how wide the shoulder on that road!

Priority should be given also to upgrading the Ocean Drive footpath for the residents of West Haven, Lakewood and surrounding areas, especially those in nursing homes, who use electric carts to access the shopping centres.

- What consideration was given to promoting tourism in the Hastings underpins the Draft Plan?

There are several opportunities to move the cycle path off the main traffic road from North Haven to Port Macquarie to allow cyclists to stop and either have a coffee en route or to simply enjoy the view of the ocean along the way. In Bonny Hills, for example, why not have the designated cycle way utilise Beach Street, Seafront Circuit, Kendall Crescent and the Seawinds estate? The track would be slightly circuitous but has a good surface and could be easily marked with appropriate signage. Similarly, in Lake Cathie, the cycle route should follow Aqua Crescent, Illaroo Road and Chepana Street to maximize the connection with the ocean and lake entrance, as well as moving cyclists as quickly as possible away from heavier traffic flows. This could again be achieved at minimum cost by establishing prominent signage.

- What consideration was given to linking some of the existing, “developer initiated” walking / cycle ways? In Bonny Hills, for example, the paved track from Kendall Crescent to Beach Street, appears to have been ignored in the Draft Plan as are the concrete paths in the Seawinds Estate. Is there a way of capitalising on these and making them part of a continuous pathway?
- Has any consideration been given to stabilising the sandy surface of the walking track from North Haven (near the surf club) to Grants Head in Bonny Hills, and making that a major feature of a dedicated cycle track linking the two communities?
- Other than the road shoulder, has any consideration been given for a separate, continuous bike path to the East of Ocean Drive between Lake Cathie and Port Macquarie Golf Club, or to the West, to skirt Innes Lake? Or has consideration been given and shelved owing to cost?
- If cycle travel is to be encouraged, and if it is to be a significant part of the way Port Macquarie/Hastings markets itself (and we believe it should) then the implementation of the Plan should be first rate, not ad hoc governed in its mediocrity by the costs involved.

In that context, it is better to manage the project well, over a longer time, rather than poorly over a shorter time frame.

## General Observations

- The road surface from Port Macquarie through North Haven to the Pacific Highway at Kew is of great concern to bike riders as the exposed blue metal surface is rough, imposes maximum rolling resistance and threat of punctures (compare the riding surface and width of shoulder on the new Oxley Highway from the donut to the roundabout near the hospital and note the popularity of that stretch of road for cyclists).
- Poor quality road resurfacing, where a thin skin of bitumen and exposed blue-metal gravel are laid over the surface of the road without repairing broken shoulders, indentations, minor potholes or drop-away shoulders, has created cycling hazards as it disguises the hazard.
- Discontinuous road shoulders create significant riding hazards for cyclists, forcing them to weave in and out of traffic lanes when the road shoulder disappears.
- Designated cycle lanes that also serve as vehicle parking zones significantly increase the risks for cyclists; they are more dangerous than not having a cycle zone at all, because at least in the latter case, cyclists can maintain a predictable, stable line of travel. (An example is the hazard created by parked traffic outside the private hospital in Lake Road).
- The road surface at the northern entrance of both Lake Cathie and Bonny Hills is badly eroded, causing bikes to move significantly on their line, again, causing significant risks for both cyclists and motorists;
- Little provision has been made at most roundabouts in Port Macquarie/Hastings where bikes must share the traffic lane.  
A cycle escape path has been provided on the Link Road below St Paul's Catholic campus. Without such cycle by-pass provisions, cyclists are totally dependent on motorists allowing them to enter the traffic lane. There have also been numerous occasions where motorists have passed cyclists heading into a roundabout and then cut them off by turning left as soon as they enter.
- Henry Kendall Reserve shared path through to Lakewood around the lake is missing from the Camden Haven Map. Whilst not all cyclists find this path suitable, it is used frequently by locals and tourists. Improved maintenance would see it become more popular
- The map shows a road shoulder existing from Ocean Drive (adjacent to Catholic Church) around the corner to Dollar Saver hardware in Laurieton. This is incorrect.
- An off road link from Henry Kendall reserve through to the existing shared path shown in green leading up to Stingray Creek Bridge would be a great link to connect up this section.
- Whilst this may not be the main focus of Council, the provision of an off road route would appeal to tourists by creating the opportunity to visit destinations all the way from Port Macquarie to Dunbogan. The apparent enthusiasm for the proposed Laurieton through to Pilot Beach shared path demonstrates the need for such development.
- We would like to see greater emphasis on total separation of cyclists from motorists. As regular users of Ocean Drive through to North Haven and also to Pilot Beach we find the intimidation of cyclists at times to be quite daunting - this despite the fact that we ride single file and attempt to behave responsibly at all times.

- An education programme is required for some cyclists and pedestrians whilst using shared pathways. Some simple signage is required asking cyclists to give way to pedestrians but also that pedestrians acknowledge cyclists and give them access.

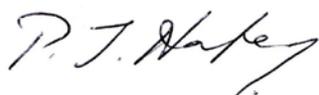
## Section 2

In addition to the above and looking from the general community's perspective:

- We estimate that over 50% of the shoulders on both sides of Ocean Drive in the 3.5 km section within Bonny Hills [from the 70k sign on the northern end to the 90/50k sign on the southern end] are actually dangerous for cyclists. Exacerbating the problem is that parking is permitted in many sections where bike lanes are actually provided – see Section 1 for more comment on the danger this poses.
- Panorama Drive provides an alternate route for part of this section of Ocean Drive through Bonny Hills, but generally speaking that section of Ocean Drive is better, and the hills experienced in Panorama Drive would deter most casual riders.
- The BHPA supports the cyclists suggestion of diverting cyclists off Ocean Drive between Beach Street and Seawind Chase but the very dangerous section between Seawind Chase and the new section of Ocean Drive is still a major concern which must be addressed.
- We class most of Houston Mitchell Drive and the entire 4 km section of Ocean Drive south of Bonny Hills to the North Haven Public School as dangerous and unsuitable for less experienced riders.
- The pathway from the SLSC at North Haven around to Laurieton is excellent (except for the access to the Stingray Creek bridge which should be fixed in the new design) though, as stated in Section 1, shared pathways with pedestrians brings other issues that an education program and/or suitable signage might improve.
- In its submission on the Draft Operational Plan the BHPA stated the following:  
*5.5.1.2 (b) The opportunity to create a cycle/walkway above the Trunk Main should not be lost. The infrastructure involved with the Trunk Main will create a corridor from the Pacific Highway to Ocean Drive and PMHC must investigate this option.*

We trust that you will find these comments useful in drawing up final plans for a strategic plan for bike paths in our LGA.

Yours sincerely,



Phil Hafey  
Secretary  
16 May 2014