

7 January 2019

**RE: SAFETY CONCERNS AND BUSINESS LOSS - REQUEST FOR MOVING THE BUS STOP LOCATION AT [REDACTED], BRUNSWICK HEADS NSW 2483 FOR THE FESTIVALS THAT ARE SPLENDOUR IN THE GRASS, FALLS FESTIVAL, BLUES AND ROOTS FESTIVAL AND ANY FUTURE EVENT THAT MAY ARISE DURING THE YEAR**

**Dear Participating Event Holders North Byron Parklands, Blues & Roots Festival, Blancs Bus Company, Local and State Departments, (Regional Maritime Services, Byron Shire Council, Cnr Cate Coorey, MP Hon Justine Elliot) and Brunswick Heads Local Police Station (Segeant Thiergung)**

My name is Amber Armstrong the owner of the business Vintage Interior Pieces located at Shop [REDACTED] Park Street, Brunswick Heads.

I have operated my small specialised business of antiques and collectables for the last 7 years and these events over the years have detrimentally affected my business and I would like to explain why this had happened.

The small bus stop area outside my shop has been designated for these regular festival events which run at peak times of the year, operate between 3-5 days and over weekends. There is also a potential risk these events will increase in days and patronage. During these festival days the busses run every 15 to 20 minutes, sometimes less depending on the festival and can be up to two buses at a time and sometimes 3 to 4 when other normal local route buses drop off or pick up from this bus zone. The festival event buses run from mid morning until 12.45am making it a constant occurrence.

These concerns have been an issue for many years now and I have raised them with the festival organisers and supporters and the local bus company. My frustration is acute now by not having my serious concerns considered or validated through any action of change and I have made efforts locally through consultation, these following issues have unfortunately fallen on deaf ears.

I understand that there has always been a bus stop zone near my shop and I would like to make it absolutely clear that I am quite happy for the bus stop to remain there for a normal bus stop operation and timetable, but when it turns into a major event pick up and drop off point I think this designated zone is inadequate, unsuitable and unsafe for this large scale undertaking to take place.

The bus stop location is situated in a very small section of road and when two or more busses arrive it pushes the buses behind each other which blocks the vision for cars and pedestrians, coming and going behind the buses and when people are crossing from either side of Park Street.

Because other buses from different companies stop here also, it is becoming very congested and is inappropriate for such large scale events to pick up and drop off their patrons.

With the increased number of people visiting at this time of the year for holidays and also with festival patrons on top of it, the congestion in this strip is becoming too much for such a small area and completely out of place for maintaining a family friendly village atmosphere which is why people love coming to the area.

If the North Parklands D.A is approved also the likelihood of festival numbers will increase substantially and I believe a better and safer alternative for this major pick up and drop off point needs to be re-considered very soon to mitigate any incident occurring.

I have not only discussed the safety issue with the local Chamber of Commerce, North Byron Parklands and Blanch's bus company I have also expressed my issues with the noise and pollution of buses on mass and the congregation of large noisy crowds in this small area right outside my small business has turned my local/regular and/or any potential new customers away. The excess noise and pollution from fumes from all these buses and concerns for my health has also forced me to close my door and by doing so have turned people away from coming in. Over some festivals I have had to shut my doors completely and lose business altogether. Last year in July over the Splendour Festival there was an incident where my advertising flag got damaged and in the first year of Splendour some of my goods were damaged by intoxicated festival goers. The festival organisers did address this but it still doesn't take away that it happened and the stress and financial loss that it caused.

There was also a heated argument and altercation that took place outside my shop on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 at around 3.30pm that came from the Falls Festival patrons waiting at the bus stop. The North Byron Parklands security guard cautioned a man and then had to forcibly remove him from the bus stop line up as the crowd was getting very heated with this individual and if this person had not been removed quickly a situation would have escalated. The security guard moved the man up onto the pathway and there they continued to have a heated altercation outside my shop. I was serving a customer at the time and my customer was very worried the individual could cause a problem so I shut and locked my door for safety reasons. The security guard managed to move him on but nonetheless it was a very confronting situation that is damaging to my business and the reputation of the town.

This particular customer felt as many customers do, that it is a very inappropriate area to have this large scale pick up and drop off point. I mentioned this incident to Kevin Thompson a community organiser for the event and he said that it was only ONE incident! He dismissed it as it should not be a concern, I replied by saying it was one too many in my opinion and for his response to be so nonchalant about a serious incident was not acceptable.

The other big impact of having so many buses lined up in this area is that it blocks the visual of my shop frontage and my signage and is compromised visually from a short and long distance. This impact does not allow new customers to even see or know that I exist.

It is very hard as a small business anyway to survive and to have these factors impinge on such a crucial times of year when patronage is meant to be good, it is very upsetting and stressful to say the least.

During the 5 years or more over these festivals I have incurred a decrease in sales and customers visiting and it is due to these factors, but unfortunately it seems my concerns are still falling on deaf ears.

Neil Johnson who is the Community Manager of Byron Parklands came up with a better compromise this year by pushing the barricades and bus arrival spot further down away from my shop which he felt was a good solution for creating more exposure and access to my shop now. But unfortunately on the last day of the festival Blanch's bus company felt it became more of a safety issue with their busses trying to move around the existing buses. Kevin Thompson who is a co-ordinator for the Brunswick Heads Visitors Centre and the festival organisation did add to that by saying that pushing it up towards my shop also creates another safety issue as cars that are parked in the zone nearest my shop do not have proper clearance to reverse their car without potentially backing into the bus. This situation is being caused by the length of road in this space and how many busses are visiting this site. The number of buses simply cannot fit into this section without causing difficulties either end.

I also felt that Neil Johnson of North Byron Parklands did come up with a good solution for creating a better environment for my shop for certain factors but needless to say the biggest issue here is the safety and this will always be a contentious issue for the bus company by moving it further away from my shop, but moving it closer to my shop also creates the same safety issue. I feel the best solution to this safety issue is creating a new placement for the bus stop altogether. This solves the problem for serious safety issues but also resolving the detrimental impact it has on my business.

It's obvious I have personal concerns for my business but I think safety should come first and if the bus stop is pushed up or down, away, or in front of my business, the amount of buses coming to this small strip is a real safety concern. It is, in my opinion, a ticking time bomb with a very increased possibility for a hazardous situation to occur.

A lot of people have told me that they avoid this area like the plague and will prefer walking on the other side of the street to avoid all the fumes, noise and safety issues.

Also if altercations like the one I mentioned earlier occur again this is counterproductive to the family friendly image we want to maintain to the area and if we are to keep the towns "simple pleasures" motto alive I believe changing the bus stop location to a better area will help alleviate the negative feeling these festivals bring.

The festival goers are far more interested in the festival event than anything else and if the bus stop was relocated for these events it would open up this Park Street area to all visitors and would make it a more friendly and approachable area to access and explore. This would increase the amenity of Park Street shops to all the holiday makers and not just the festival patrons off the buses.

With that, and hopefully with the consideration of my heartfelt concerns expressed, the next thing to do is to come up with an alternative bus stop location just for these festival events.

John from Blanch's said that as long as it's a safe area that has turning area he would be open to other alternatives. Neil Johnson from North Parklands also said he would be happy to consider an area that is good for the buses also.

Can these other locations be considered please?

- 1) Memorial Park in Fawcett Street, could be made into a good area as it has an open space, good access to amenities, short walk to river, park, toilet facilities and shops etc.



- 2) Brunswick Heads Surf Club, South Street, good open safe area, close to beach, short walk along footbridge for patrons to enter town. This picture is opposite the surf club, it has toilet facilities and only short walk to town and beach right there.





- 3 The Brunswick Heads School bus stop ABOVE –entrance further down Park Street, nice shady covered area, short walk to town, beach, river.

- 4 Tweed Street just before IGA Shopping Centre, a bus stop could be put here, there was one there but was removed recently?



- 5 Tweed Street, At the Top of The Terrace Street (end of Caravan Park) sheltered area and turning point or they could continue onto the highway from this point.



All of these alternative spots take the congestion away from an already busy main street of Park Street that is very narrow also and needs to be clear for pedestrian access.



ABOVE IS PICTURE OF CURRENT PARK STREET LOCATION, TOO MANY BUSES IN SMALL AREA – KEEP THIS AS A NORMAL BUS STOP BUT RELOCATE A SPECIAL SEPARATE BUS STOP LOCATION FOR THE FESTIVALS ONLY.



ABOVE SHOWS THE FESTIVAL BUS BLOCKING THE LANEWAY AS THE NORMAL AIRPORT BUSES AND COUNTRY LINK BUSES STOP HERE ALSO. THIS ROAD SECTION IS TOO SHORT FOR NORMAL BUSES AND FESTIVAL BUSES TO OPERATE SAFELY TOGETHER. IF THE FESTIVAL BUS STOP DROP OFF AND PICK UP POINT MOVES AND IS IN A SEPARATE LOCATION, THIS WOULD MAKE THIS AREA A SAFE BUS STOP AGAIN.

I would be most grateful that these legitimate and very valid concerns are listened too and that a positive change can occur with consultation with the bus company the main festival body and local organisers. I would be most appreciative also that this letter is followed up with a response and action please.

Please see pictures attached of busses in this location and why I have these concerns.

Yours sincerely

Amber Armstrong

Vintage Interior Pieces

██████████ Park Street

Brunswick Heads NSW 2483

██████████