Dorrigo Chamber of Commerce Inc.

Policy name: **Dorrigo Chamber of Commerce Waterfall Way Road Policy**

**Policy Version: Issue 1**

Adopted at Chamber meeting: 21st January 2019

1 Background

Waterfall Way is a sealed east-west roadway connecting the coastal Pacific Highway to the New England region. It is 170km in length extending from Raleigh in the east to Armidale in the west.

The majority of traffic movements are between Raleigh and Dorrigo in the east, and locally in the built-up area of Armidale in the west.

Waterfall Way is a roadway of one lane in each direction with following exceptions:

- Three shared one-lane sections at Newell Falls, Sherrard Falls, and a section between these two falls.
- Six formal overtaking lanes (3 eastbound and 3 westbound) all located west of Ebor.

It is the primary access route serving Dorrigo. It has been the lifeblood of the town for more than a century.

Sections of the road are steep with many bends, particularly between Dorrigo and Thora. Considerable constraints to road construction and maintenance are due to the geology, topography, high seasonal rainfall, and environmental management, especially in the World Heritage area through the Dorrigo National Park.

Waterfall Way is a major tourist route as well as servicing as a lively commercial and private corridor.

For many road users, especially overseas tourists, Waterfall Way is the first high-speed undivided country road they encounter after exiting the Pacific Highway. Drivers with limited experience navigating narrow and winding roads with large caravans and recreational vehicles (RV’s) present challenges for all road users. This is particularly the situation when drivers of these vehicles have limited judgement with regards the size of their vehicles and off-set distances from road cuttings/banks. The perception of safety as well as enforced road usage rules need balancing with regards the design and operation of Waterfall Way, as it is indeed a spectacular and unique road.
2 Purpose of this Policy

To provide a single ‘one-stop’ policy, endorsed by the Dorrigo Chamber of Commerce, to reflect the view of the Chamber, and which is publicly and easily accessible by all stakeholders, especially relevant government agencies responsible for design and funding, through the Dorrigo Chamber of Commerce’s webpage www.dorrigo.com

3 Reasons for this Policy

For more than a century, the Dorrigo Chamber of Commerce, and its predecessor, the Dorrigo Progress Association, have campaigned for improvements to Waterfall Way to address safety and accessibility. Without doubt the sealed road of today is of significantly better quality than the road of a century ago.

However, many recommendations and contributions made by the Chamber’s members (all volunteers) to relevant authorities are too often lost or forgotten – by both authorities and their representatives as well as members of the Chamber. This has resulted in inefficiencies, duplication, and in the case of the Chamber, considerable volunteer-fatigue.

The Chamber understands these lost-opportunities are likely due to the following:

- Significant turnover of staff in government organisations results in loss of local knowledge and connections;
- Changes in members of the Chamber’s Executive Committee resulting in loss of local knowledge and connections;
- The format for delivering, archiving, and retrieving information has and is changing rapidly. Past submissions have been lost, misplaced, or filed in manners which are no longer recoverable or accessible;
- Government organisations have changed names, merged and split, dissolving knowledge and making it difficult to retain community input and preferences;
- Responsible organisations for road design, works & maintenance have increased in numbers from local, to state, to the private sector, with a resultant loss in a centralised knowledge pool;
- Changes have been made to address specific contemporary issues, such as the 2015 temporary increase in quarry truck movements associated with delivering gravel to the Pacific Highway Upgrade works, without fully considering other implications to other users of Waterfall Way;
- Major maintenance and repair works have been done in isolation, missing opportunities to address local preferences and, in some cases, detrimentally altering the use of the road;
- Community consultation processes by various government departments have unfairly weighted different road users without considering the wider use of Waterfall Way to the community;
- Different sections of Waterfall Way have been used by single-focused community groups to unfairly argue for change to other sections of Waterfall Way, often to the disadvantage of Dorrigo.

4 Section of road (boundary) for this Policy

The Dorrigo Chamber of Commerce Waterfall Way Road Policy covers the section of Waterfall Way known at the date of this Policy as road number B78, between:

- The CBD of Bellingen township, and
- The intersection of Waterfall Way with the Armidale-Grafton Road near Hernani.

This section of road is identified in colour-blue in Figure 1 below.

![Figure 1: The Section of Road related to this Policy is shown in colour blue (from Google Maps – downloaded 18FEB2016)](image-url)
5 Specific Policies

5.1 General – for full section of road covered by this policy

5.1.1 Safety of users of the Waterfall Way is the priority of the Chamber.

5.1.2 The perception of safety as well as enforced road usage rules need balancing with regards the design and operation of Waterfall Way. For many road users, especially overseas tourists, Waterfall Way is the first high-speed un-divided country road they encounter after exiting off the Pacific Highway. This is particularly relevant for large caravans and recreational vehicles (RV’s).

5.1.3 Any planned roadworks requiring the replacement or modification to the road surface to incorporate ‘pull-over bays’ or overtaking lanes for slow moving vehicles where possible;

5.1.4 Any media announcements, publications or signage associated with road closures or road works to emphasise the temporary nature of the work.

5.1.5 Media announcements will be positive about the quality of the roadway to and from Dorrigo to encourage visitors;

5.1.6 Permit oversized loads exceeding 2.5 metres width, with appropriate permit, and requiring one pilot vehicle traveling ahead of the oversized vehicle.

5.1.7 Any planned roadworks resulting in the overnight closure of one or more lanes on Waterfall Way will be discussed with the Chamber well in advance of the closure.

5.1.8 Any engineering works or methodologies developed specifically for Waterfall Way will be discussed with Chamber prior to works commencing.

5.1.9 Change the line marking colour from white to yellow and install reflective materials, particularly on the centreline markings, so as to improve visibility in times of heavy fog. Work with the Dorrigo Chamber of Commerce to develop improved signage to advise road users to turn on low-beam headlights when driving in fog, and ‘courtesy signage’ to encourage slower vehicles to pull-over to allow faster vehicles to pass.

5.1.10 Review, for the purpose of upgrading, the class of road according to RMS.

5.1.11 Install automatic electronic fog warning signs to suggest alternative roads in times of heavy fog.
5.2 Policy for section of Road between Bellingen and Thora

5.2.1 Install at least two overtaking lane east-bound traffic.

5.2.2 Install at least two overtaking lane west-bound traffic.

5.2.3 Install multiple signage to indicate to travelling motorists the distance ahead of the upcoming overtaking lane/s;

5.2.4 Install signage on approach to overtaking lanes recommending slow vehicles allow others to pass;

5.3 Policy for section of Road between Thora and Maynards Plains Rd

5.3.1 Install at least 3 “Pull-over Passing Lane for Slow Vehicles” for West-bound vehicles;

5.3.2 Install at least 3 “Pull-over Passing Lane for Slow Vehicles” for east-bound vehicles;

5.3.3 Install signage to indicate to travelling motorists of upcoming passing lane and encourage slow-moving vehicles to let others pass;

5.3.4 Eliminate all one-lane sections of the road.

5.3.5 Where Give Way signs are used on one-way sections, then illuminate these signs with flashing lights, or at least in the interim reflective, high-visibility sign boarders.

5.3.6 Install pull-off areas for tourists and encourage, through signage, for tourists to pull off to these areas to enjoy the rich rainforest and also to allow other vehicles to pass.

5.3.7 Install barrier along section of road locally known as the ‘ledge of terror’.
5.4 Policy for section of Road between Maynards Plains Rd and Tyringham Road

5.4.1 Install a dedicated right-turn lane for west-bound vehicles turning into Dome Road;

5.4.2 Install direction arrows on roadway east and west of the Dome Road intersection, targeting foreign tourists;

5.4.3 Implement a traffic calming concept at the intersection with Hickory Street (such as the 2007 BSC concept as previously endorsed by the Chamber in 2009. Refer Figure 5 at the end of this document);

5.4.4 Convert the intersection with Hickory Street to a roundabout;

5.4.5 Maintain the War Memorial Monument at the intersection with Hickory Street at its present site, position, form, and architecture and garden landscaping in accordance with Bellingen Shire Local Environment Plan listing number I133: https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID =1110345 ;

5.4.6 At any intersection, any additional structures on or adjacent to the road pavement shall not exceed a height of 450mm above the adjacent pavement level;

5.4.7 Vehicular traffic lights not to be used as a form of permanent traffic management;

5.4.8 Future planning to consider a heavy vehicle bypass of the town centre, potentially with variable operational times.

5.5 Policy for section of Road between Tyringham Road and Armidale-Grafton Road

5.5.1 Install a pedestrian crossing at Dorrigo High School and install a pedestrian push-button either side of the crossing, which by pressing, results in the illumination of flashing warning lights to warn on-coming traffic;

5.5.2 Install at least two overtaking lanes for both east and west bound traffic;

5.5.3 Install signage to indicate to travelling motorists upcoming overtaking lane;

5.5.4 Install signage on approach to overtaking lanes recommending slow vehicles allow others to pass;
6 Relevant charts and data

6.1 Waterfall Way Grades

Figure 2 Waterfall Way Grades


The report is in PDF format and can be downloaded directly to your download folder in your web browser through the above link. Alternatively, search the following in your search engine (such as Google) “B78 Waterfall Way Draft Corridor Strategy July 2017”
Figure 3 Waterfall Way – traffic count locations 2015


The report is in PDF format and can be downloaded directly to your download folder in your web browser through the above link. Alternatively, search the following in your search engine (such as Google) “B78 Waterfall Way Draft Corridor Strategy July 2017”
Figure 4 Waterfall Way – daily traffic volumes 2015


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**Figure 5 Dorrigo CBD Masterplan 2007 – detailed view of the proposed development at the intersection of Waterfall Way (Cudgery Street) and Hickory Street showing retention of the heritage monument.**