

Residents unite on road protest

Jessica Bahr

Jessica.Bahr@scnews.com.au

A GROUP of concerned residents has labelled road upgrades unsafe and of substandard design, and is imploring council to heed concerns.

Verrierdale Residents Group members gathered at Doonan Bridge Road Saturday morning to express their concerns and frustrations.

Group president Stefo Prestage believed upgrades had not been explained properly to residents and the Sunshine Coast Council had done insufficient community consultation.

"(The protest) went even better than expected," he said.

"We had a really good turn out and all the residents were really fired up. We put up some signs, walked along the road, stopped traffic and some of the construction, and voiced our concerns.

"It (the upgrade) has been going on for about a year. We had a community meeting with council and they didn't listen to our concerns.

"They're proposing a 100km/h speed limit along

the road and have built a huge drain with no safety barriers around it.

"It is quite dangerous.

"Who will be responsible if somebody dies?"

Division 9 Councillor Steve Robinson said council had made "every effort" to address issues raised by residents while also achieving a balanced and safe outcome.

The residents' group, however, has proposed an alternative upgrade plan designed with the help of two independent engineers.

Mr Prestage said the engineers had visited the site and agreed safety was cause for concern.

"As residents, we don't want anybody to get hurt," he said.

"We put together our design based on consultation with engineers but council ignored it. There are accidents all the time."

Mr Prestage said the group was seeking a 70km/h speed limit.

He warned drivers that wildlife also inhabited the area and vehicles needed to slow down.

In a statement provided to the *Daily*, Cr Robinson said the council had held

multiple meetings with residents regarding design options, commissioned peer reviews and a road-safety audit by independent and accredited road engineering consultants.

"While project delays have occurred undertaking these reviews, changes considered safe and appropriate by both independent and council engineers and designers have been made to alter design elements as requested by Verrierdale residents," he said.

"These changes include minimising the depth of a drain designed to help alleviate nearby property flooding.

"Additional features such as safety guidance signage will also be added to help alleviate residents' concerns."

Cr Robinson said it was important to note that speed limits were not set by council and were determined by a Speed Advisory Committee including QPS, TMR and other stakeholders.

Mr Prestage said the group would contact the State Government to take their protest further and seek a review.



PROTESTERS RALLY: Verrierdale residents are incensed at what they claim are unsafe upgrades to their quiet, rural Doonan Bridge Rd. PHOTO: JOHN MCCUTCHEON