

Uki "Where the mountains touch the sky"

UKI VILLAGE & DISTRICT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED
P.O Box 3141, UKI, N.S.W. 2484

1 March 2015

Danny Rose
Manager Roads & Stormwater
Tweed Shire Council
PO Box 816
Murwillumbah NSW 2484

Dear Danny

Your letter dated 1 December 2014 requested assistance from the Uki Residents Association (UKIRA) in collecting community opinion on the 'rainbow' painting of the handrail at Smiths Creek Bridge.

Consequently, UKIRA decided to run a community survey in which respondents were asked to choose one of three statements that best expressed their opinion regarding the 'rainbow' paintwork. A copy of the survey form is attached. UKIRA had 1,000 copies printed, and courtesy of Australia Post, a copy was sent to each household on the South Arm of the Tweed River, an area extending from Byangum Bridge to the Nimbin Turnoff. This is the same distribution that is used for the Uki News and Tweed Link. In addition, further copies were left at shops within Uki Village and at the UKIRA stall during the December and January Uki Buttery Bazaar markets. The survey ran from 10 December to 23 January 2015.

A whopping 353 survey forms were returned. This was a massive response, and easily the largest participation rate in any local survey run by UKIRA.

After excluding thirteen survey returns because they were invalid, and allowing for 56 returns that identified the name of more than one household member, a total of 404 responses was included in the overall count (note that if additional members of a household are excluded from the count, the result is almost identical).

The results are as follows:

- 90 respondents (22.3%) believe that the handrail should be painted over as soon as possible.
- 28 respondents (6.9%) believe that the handrail should be painted over when the bridge is due for repainting.
- 286 respondents (70.8%) believe that the painting should stay as a permanent memorial to all children lost locally.

Many respondents included carefully considered comments, reflecting the concern and passion that this issue has generated.

Negative comments include:

- Chiefly around the fact that the painting was done without approval and was therefore graffiti.
- If allowed to remain, it would set a precedent where other public assets might be similarly painted.
- Some respondents didn't like the rainbow colours and were concerned that Uki would become "like Nimbin".
- The painting represented a selfish act on the part of the family concerned.
- Compassion has dominated the debate.

Positive comments include:

- The 'rainbow' painting adds colour and brightens up the entry to Uki.
- Unfortunately it was done without approval but the joy that it brings should be the overriding consideration.
- The painting reflects a heartfelt community.
- It is healing and it helps children to understand death.
- Some respondents also expressed a willingness to assist in any ongoing maintenance.

Notwithstanding a level of opposition to the 'rainbow' painting, the survey result highlights the appetite for creativity across the Uki community. Should Council decide to remove the 'rainbow' painting, UKIRA would anticipate widespread support from local residents for a proposal to create, possibly in Sweetnam Park, a suitable memorial for all local children who have lost their lives.

For the record, thirteen survey forms were excluded because they either failed to identify a name and local address (10) or because the respondents had lodged a second form (3). The vast majority of the survey forms (89%) were returned through a survey box placed at the Uki PO and Newsagency; and the remainder at the Uki Buttery Bazaar markets or via email or post. Forms collected at the Uki PO & Newsagency were opened and sequentially numbered by UKIRA's Treasurer, Philip Carr, in the presence of the proprietor, Peter Messing. Collation of the survey forms was undertaken by Philip Carr and Justine Stratton (President of UKIRA). The survey forms are available for your perusal should you require them.

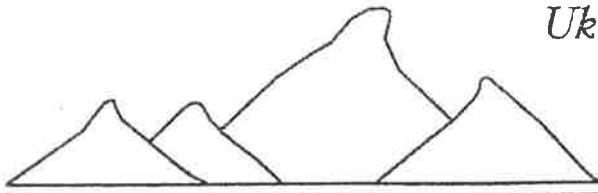
Thank you for inviting UKIRA to coordinate this community consultation process. I must say that the workload was substantially greater than first expected but we are pleased that we could assist in this important task.

Hopefully the above will assist in Council's deliberations. If you need any further information please contact Philip Carr on 6679 5855.

Regards



Justine Stratton
President



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COMMUNITY SURVEY RAINBOW PAINTING AT SMITHS CREEK BRIDGE

Tweed Shire Council has advised that the rainbow painting of the handrail at Smiths Creek Bridge was done without approval and as a result Council is considering its removal as graffiti. The painting was intended as a memorial to a Uki boy, Marley Cross, who died suddenly in 2013. At its November meeting, Council resolved to take no immediate action pending advice from the Uki Residents Association regarding community opinion on the paintwork.

Please CIRCLE the statement that best expresses your opinion about the paintwork:

- **IT SHOULD BE PAINTED OVER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**
- **IT SHOULD STAY UNTIL THE BRIDGE IS DUE FOR REPAINTING (APPROX. 1-2 YEARS)**
- **IT SHOULD STAY AS A PERMANENT MEMORIAL TO ALL CHILDREN LOST LOCALLY**

OTHER OPTIONS/COMMENTS.....

NAME:

ADDRESS:

NOTE: FORMS RECEIVED WITHOUT NAMES AND ADDRESSES WILL NOT BE COUNTED. NAMES AND ADDRESSES WILL BE USED FOR SURVEY VALIDATION PURPOSES ONLY.

Please place the form in the special survey box at the Uki Post Office & News, OR send to UKIRA, PO Box 3141, Uki 2484, OR scan to ukiresidentsassociation@gmail.com.

The survey will be open until Friday 23 January 2015.

Thank you for your participation.