



Bingie Residents Association

Public Access Presentation, 9 September 2025

Good morning. My name is Gillianne Tedder.
Thank you for the opportunity to present to council.
I'm here in my capacity as President of The Bingie Residents Association (BRA)

I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the lands on which we're meeting - The Brinja Yuin people.

I thank them for their ongoing custodianship of these beautiful lands, and also for their generosity in continuing to extend the offer of reconciliation to all of us.

BRA is strongly in favour of the reopening of Congo Road North.

While our members don't reside in the village of Congo all Bingie residents are directly impacted by this closure.
Everyone in the area is now forced to use Bingie Road leading to significantly increased traffic both along Bingie Road and also at the dangerous intersection with the Princes Highway.

Safety

Our concerns are primarily about safety and amenity.
I imagine you're all aware the Congo Bingie area is very heavily forested and therefore very bush fire prone.

We appreciate this has been mentioned before however as summer approaches the importance of reinstating access along Congo Rd north becomes urgent

This is not an academic exercise for us.
It's potentially a matter of life or death.

There was two routes in and out of our area, and now there's only one.

This isn't rational.

It's also directly opposite the recommendations made by the Bushfire Royal Commission after the fatal and traumatic bushfires of Black Summer in 2019 /20

Since then we've had 4 years of good rain. However, the science is in.

Human induced climate change means this place will get hotter.

Fires and storms will become more intense.

We need to be prepared.

Residents of Meringo Congo and Bingie are only too aware of this threat and that's why we do not accept the closure of this important second access.

We understand that emergency services supposedly have keys so they can get through the road blocks on Lot 197. This might work for the gate, but does not address the concrete blocks blocking the road. In the case of a fire, a drowning or a medical emergency timing is critical and the "set of keys" solution is not good enough.

In an evacuation situation the Bingie RFS estimates there could be around 1500 vehicles or more trying to leave the area.

BRA's position is that Congo Rd Nth needs to be reinstated, re opened for safety's sake so that residents and emergency services can get in and out as quickly as possible. Two roads are better than one.

I'd like to address the notion that residents pushing for the road to be reopened only have their own interests at heart, they're only concerned about their own little patch.

I suggest this issue goes well beyond that.

Congo Campground and the Bingie Dreaming Track attract tourists from much further afield.

I was in Canberra last week and people there were asking me whether or not the road had been reopened.

Congo Rd Nth isn't just a means of getting from A to B. It's part of a beautiful journey that people take when they're touring the Nature Coast.

Amenity

BRA also regrets the loss of amenity that the road closure has caused to the Shire and wider area.

People can no longer walk and cycle the quieter northern access.

Younger and older drivers are now forced to join the highway at the more dangerous Bingie Road intersection

And when there is a major incident that closes the highway, Congo Road North is no longer available as an alternative route

Public road

BRA respectfully remind Council that the public has a right to access public roads.

As Council's own email to residents after the judgement stated, the Supreme Court determined that the public road on Lot 197 is a public road.

Council is now the road authority in this instance and therefore has an obligation to ensure access.

BRA urges Council to reopen the road.

It seems unfair

BRA notes that several other landholders along the northern portion of Congo Rd negotiated in good faith 20 odd years ago on the

understanding that they were contributing to a permanent public road.

It seems unfair that these landholders came to the party in good faith and are now cut off from Congo

It's a complex issue

We understand this is a complex issue not of your creation. You've inherited it and the difficult job of finding a solution.

We want to acknowledge that and also make a point of thanking council for the community consultation they've undertaken. It's appreciated.

Residents have been patient and proactive and are committed to being a part of the solution.

There is a great deal of good will in the community and there are many sharp minds.

BRA hopes that council can bring them together to reach a just solution

Thank you
Gillianne Tedder

Ends