

Guy Brantingham's address to Eurobodalla Shire Council Regarding the Closure of North Congo Road 12 August 2025

Impact on the Cycling Community

Good morning Mr Mayor, Councillors and Staff

My name is Guy Brantingham and I am the founder and President of the Eurobodalla Bicycle User Group. We call ourselves EuroBUG. We are a large group with over 180 different riders enjoying our scheduled rides each year. Our rides take place all over the Shire and typically have 30 to 60 riders on a Monday and 20 to 30 on a Wednesday. We ride on State Forest and National Park fire trails and quiet sealed and unsealed public roads. We do NOT generally ride on the single-track trails such as at Mogo and Narooma, (which are fabulous)

I am addressing you on behalf of the local and wider cycling community to express our concern and disappointment regarding the ongoing closure of North Congo Road. It has resulted in the cancellation of numerous rides that were favourites of our Group.

North Congo Road is a cherished asset for cyclists in our region. It is a vital component of a route that links Moruya to Bingi, optionally via the Dreaming Track and Meringo. Its unique combination of features—a route that is largely sealed, gently graded, and scenically beautiful—makes it one of the most enjoyable cycling routes in the area.

Unlike many other options, the route is not overly hilly, which opens it up to riders of varying ages and abilities. Its popularity is evidenced by the many cyclists who, prior to the closure, would gather every Saturday to enjoy the route together. The regular men's Thursday riding group also relished that section of road each week.

My wife and I used to ride every Saturday from Bergalia to Moruya for coffee. We used to see many other riders on Saturday mornings enjoying that very special ride.

This route is particularly well-suited for road bikes and was one of the few suitable quiet sealed road routes available in our Shire. A ride from Broulee to Bingi was a favourite for many road bike riders.

Regrettably, since the closure, our group has been forced to cancel several scheduled rides each year to Congo and beyond.

The much-anticipated weekly Thursday rides are no longer possible on that route, diminishing a longstanding tradition that brought together friends, promoted fitness, and fostered a sense of community. They can no longer discuss men's business at the "table of knowledge" in the Congo camping ground.

I was involved some time ago with the development of a coastal cycle route from Queensland to the Victorian border. The aim was to identify a coastal route that minimised riding on the Highway which can be unpleasant and unsafe. The North Congo Rd was a key section that took riders off the Princes Highway between Moruya and Bergalia. The long-distance cyclist is currently denied the use of that scenic and safer section of road.

I fully understand the complexity of Council's dilemma with this issue, having been involved with it myself some twenty odd years ago. What is frustrating at present is the lack of regular communication with the community about how Council is taking the matter forward.

In the interim, as cyclists we would be very happy for Council to establish a gravel track along the creek bank through the Shepherds land. This could be used by bike riders and walkers. This would provide a good short-term solution, whilst the issue of the road reopening is resolved. This would restore a safe cycling access to Congo.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Cyclists look forward to your response and to the possibility of once again enjoying the unique benefits that North Congo Road offers to our ,and the wider cycling community.

Guy Brantingham

On behalf of Euro BUG and the wider cycling community.