

M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace

Proposed temporary closure of Old Punt
Road | Community Consultation Report

June 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

Transport for NSW acknowledges the Wonnarua, Worimi and Awabakal people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which the M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace project is being built.

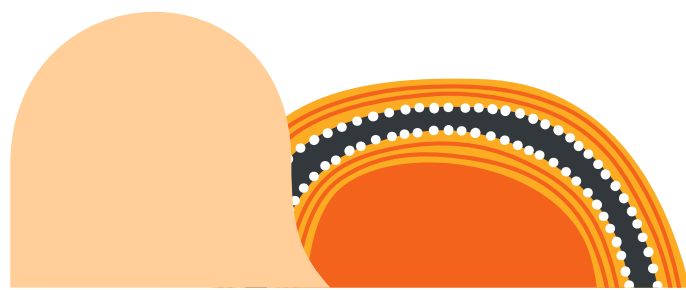
We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal people and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

Many of the transport routes we use today – from rail lines, to roads, to water crossings – follow the traditional songlines, trade routes and ceremonial paths in Country that our nation's First Peoples followed for tens of thousands of years.

Transport for NSW is committed to honouring Aboriginal peoples' cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Australian and NSW governments are investing in the M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace project to ease congestion, improve traffic flow and reduce traffic volumes on the surrounding road network.

During detailed design for the project, the project team identified an opportunity to avoid relocating a high-pressure gas pipeline during construction by moving the proposed interchange at Old Punt Road.

The refined location aligns with the current intersection which complicates construction due to live traffic. The team proposed a temporary closure of Old Punt Road to enable access to key areas of the existing road for construction as well as a safe construction area for the new Tomago Interchange.

Prior to developing the proposed traffic changes, the project team completed a traffic impact assessment to develop a comprehensive understanding of the anticipated impacts. The assessment included the evaluation of traffic data to quantify the impacts of the proposed temporary road closure and traffic detour on Old Punt Road during peak hours.

1.2 Purpose of this report

Transport consulted the community about a proposed temporary closure of Old Punt Road to the Pacific Highway between late September and mid-October 2024. The closure was proposed to facilitate construction of the new M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace. The consultation aimed to identify potential impacts for road users, residents and businesses who use Old Punt Road and Tomago Road in Tomago.

This report summarises the feedback received and explains how that feedback has informed the proposed traffic changes.

1.3 Benefits of the project

On opening, the project will save motorists between seven and nine minutes of travel time during peak periods, bypass up to five sets of traffic lights and reduce traffic demand on existing key routes across the road network.

Key benefits of the project include:

- Improved connection between the M1 Pacific Motorway and the Pacific Highway
- Improved traffic flow for motorists and freight for more reliable travel times
- Improved access to the surrounding road network
- Improved safety for all road users
- Reduced traffic volumes on the existing road network, improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists
- More efficient access to facilitate economic growth for the Lower Hunter and key regional employment areas such as the Port of Newcastle, Newcastle Airport, Tomago, Beresfield and Black Hill.

1.4 Original proposal for temporary closure of Old Punt Road

The project team initially proposed to temporarily close Old Punt Road at the intersection with the Pacific Highway to allow the construction of the permanent intersection, including the placement of fill material. The closure was proposed from January 2025 for up to nine months.

The closure would have required motorists exiting the Tomago industrial area to travel from Old Punt Road to Tomago Road to head north or south on the Pacific Highway. The intersection of Tomago Road with the Pacific Highway would be upgraded to include a northbound turning lane. This work would be completed immediately prior to any changes being implemented at Old Punt Road.

Pacific Highway southbound traffic would not be able to turn left into Old Punt Road and would be detoured via Tomago Road. Traffic modelling predicted that the traffic changes would add an additional four minutes to the journey of road users.

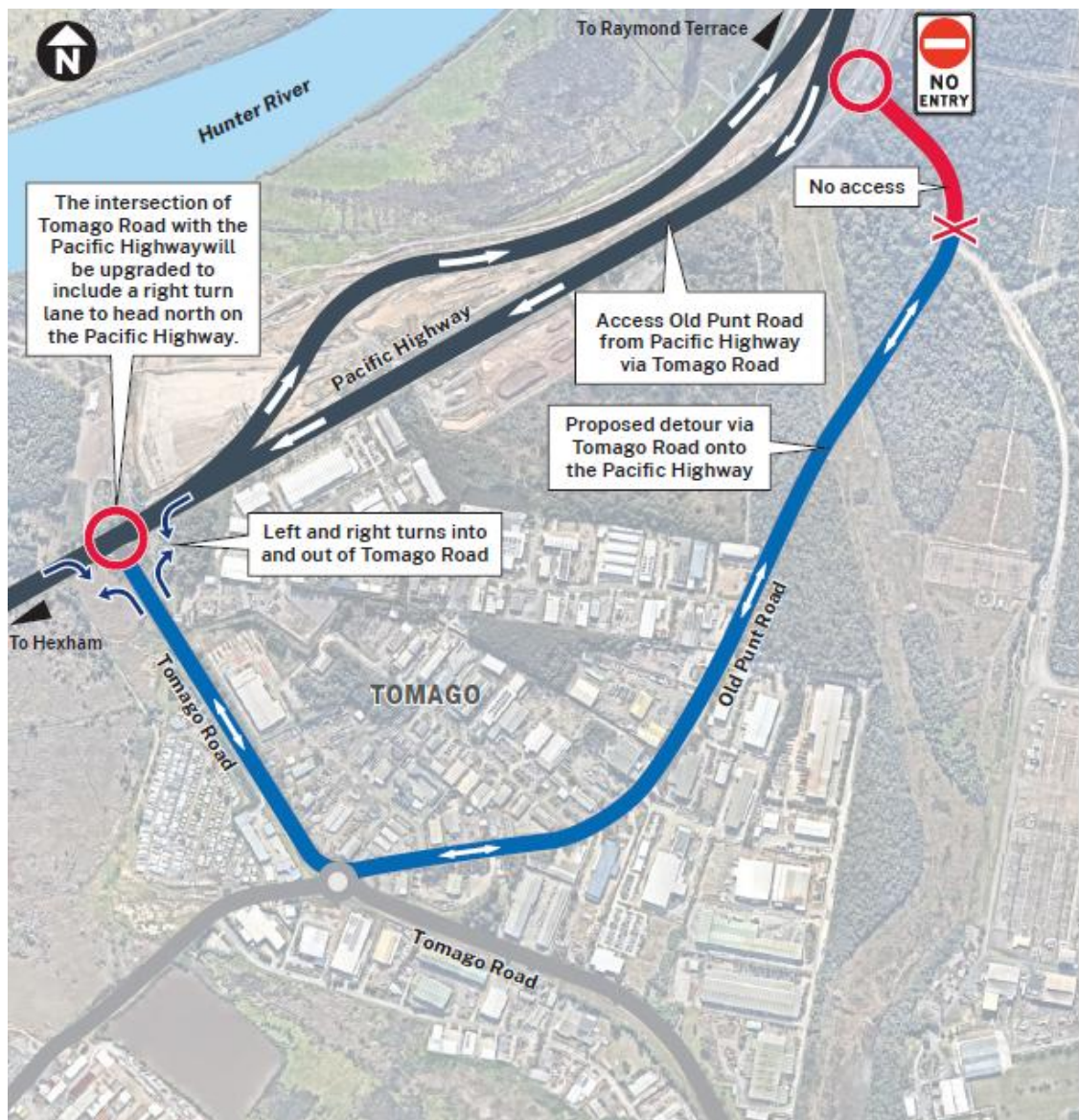


Figure 1 - Original proposed traffic changes at Old Punt Road

2. Community consultation

Transport considers meaningful community consultation to be essential in the development and construction of projects. Consultation in relation to the proposed temporary closure of Old Punt Road provided important feedback which has assisted the project team to better understand potential impacts and identify reasonable and feasible mitigation and support measures. These consultation activities are further described below.

2.1 Have your say consultation

The ‘Have your say’ consultation began on 30 September 2024 and ran for two weeks. During this time the project team:

- conducted a doorknock of the Tomago residential village (Aspen Lifestyle Village Tomago) and all businesses in the Tomago industrial area (i.e. on Tomago Road, Old Punt Road and associated cross-streets)
- met with business representatives and attended online webinars to understand potential business impacts associated with the proposed closure of Old Punt Road
- delivered copies of the ‘Have your say’ notification including a link to an online survey and webinars to all properties on the above-mentioned streets
- hosted a community pop-up stall at the Old Punt Road Café
- hosted two online webinars for interested residents and business representatives.

Throughout the ‘Have your say’ period, members of the project team were available to engage with the community and address any inquiries. Details of the consultation activities are in **Error! Reference source not found..**

Table 1 - ‘Have your say’ consultation activity details

Event type	Venue / location	Date	Number of recipients / participants
Doorknock and letter distribution	Tomago Road, Old Punt Road and cross-streets	24 and 25 September 2024	343
Survey	Online	30 September 2024 to 14 October 2024	30
Community pop-up stall	Old Punt Road Cafe	2 October 2024 (8am to 11am)	14
Webinar	Online	3 October 2024 (9am to 9:30am)	4
		3 October 2024 (5:30pm to 6pm)	1

A project webpage was also dedicated to advertising the community pop-up stall and webinars, and making project information available for download, including the online survey form. All stakeholders contacted by the project team were encouraged to provide feedback about the proposed temporary closure of Old Punt Road by:

- Using the camera on their mobile phone or other handheld device, scanning a feedback QR code on the 'Have your say' notification, then completing and submitting an online survey form
- Completing a hard copy of the survey (if preferred) at the community pop-up stall
- Contacting the project team via:
 - the project Infoline: 1800 094 895
 - the project email address: m12rt-southern@jhga.com.au
 - post to Locked Bag 2030 Newcastle, NSW 2300.

3. Community feedback

This section of the report describes the community feedback received by the project team during the 'Have your say' period.

3.1 Have your say submissions

The 'Have your say' consultation activities held between 30 September 2024 and 14 October 2024 (refer **Error! Reference source not found.**) generated a variety of feedback about the potential traffic and business impacts for road users, especially for residents and businesses that use Old Punt Road and Tomago Road. The feedback is described below.

3.1.1 Current and future traffic congestion

Most submissions and feedback received by the project team focused on current and future traffic congestion within the Tomago Industrial area. Both business representatives and residents expressed concerns that the volume of vehicles using the local road network, particularly Old Punt Road and Tomago Road, is too high. Many believe that the traffic volume on these roads has already exceeded their capacity.

Results of the online survey conducted during the 'Have your say' period are consistent with comments received during the door knocking. A total of 30 individuals completed the online survey. The results illustrated in **Error! Reference source not found.** show that almost one-third of the survey respondents (7 out of 30) use the Old Punt Road and Pacific Highway intersection more than five times per day. More than half of the survey respondents (17 out of 30) stated that they use the intersection at least twice per day.

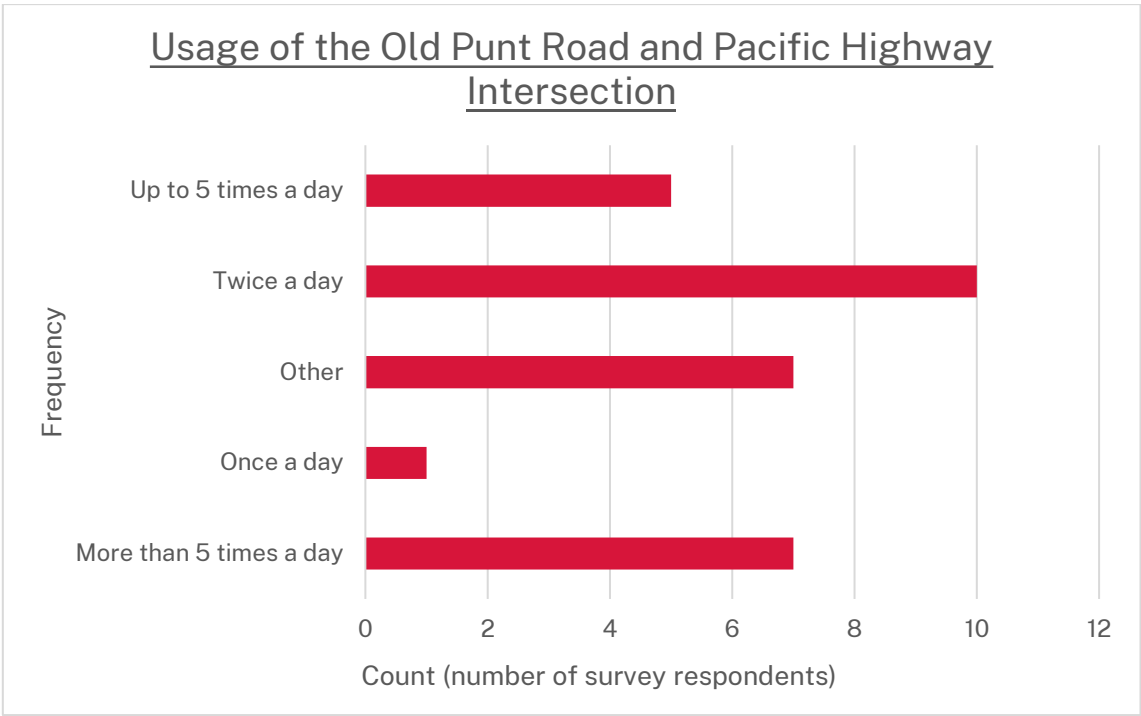


Figure 2 - Old Punt Road amd Pacific Highway intersection usage

The traffic impact assessment of the proposed temporary closure of Old Punt Road estimated it would create up to an additional four minutes of travel time during peak hours for road users exiting the industrial area via the Tomago Road and Pacific Highway intersection. Some residents and business representatives were sceptical of this estimate and anticipate it would be greater.

Many businesses and residents that use the local road network in the Tomago industrial area expect that proposed temporary closure of Old Punt Road would worsen the current traffic conditions, especially in peak travel periods, from 5am to 7:30am, and 3pm to 5:30pm.

While travel delays are a source of frustration for all road users, the primary concern of some business representatives is the potential for productivity loss and therefore revenue loss. The following survey response highlights this concern:

“It’s a very congested area in Tomago, thousands of cars of a morning and afternoon trying to leave the one intersection will be a lot of lost time, in turn costing company dollars.”

Other business representatives explained that extra traffic congestion might create challenges for suppliers intending to reach businesses in the industrial area in a timely manner. Others referred to complications that added congestion would create for staff travel time, and the ability of businesses to attract new and retain existing staff.

Response

The project team has revised its proposal to completely close Old Punt Road at the intersection with the Pacific Highway to a staged, partial closure. Stage 1 will remove right hand turn movements into and out of Old Punt Road and will be in place for about six weeks.

In Stage 2, only the left hand turn out of Old Punt Road (onto the southbound lane of the Pacific Highway) will be retained to allow traffic to exit the Tomago industrial area from both directions. Pacific Highway southbound traffic will not be able to turn left into Old Punt Road and will be detoured via Tomago Road.

The intersection of Tomago Road with the Pacific Highway will still be upgraded prior to Stage 1 of the partial closure to include a northbound turning lane.

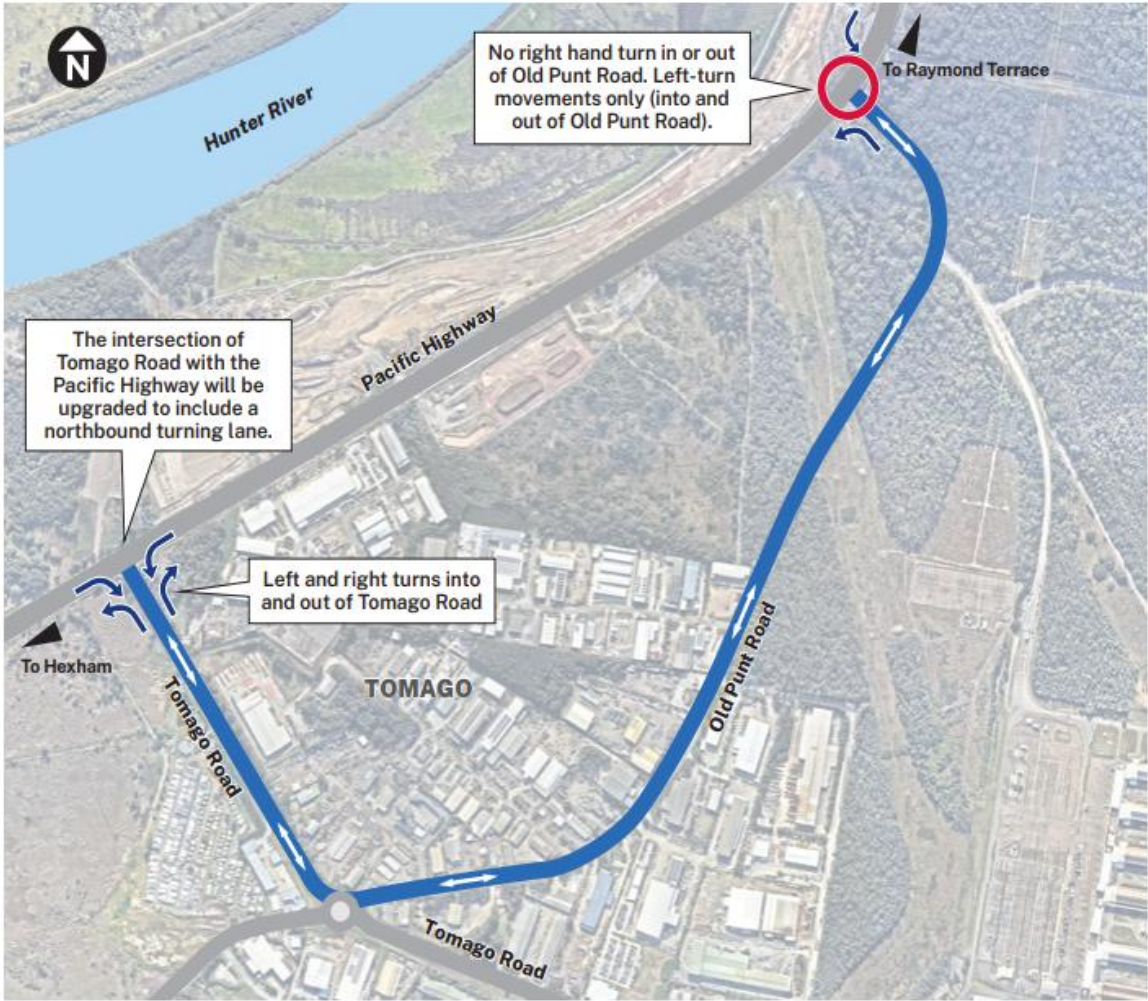


Figure 3 - Stage 1 traffic change

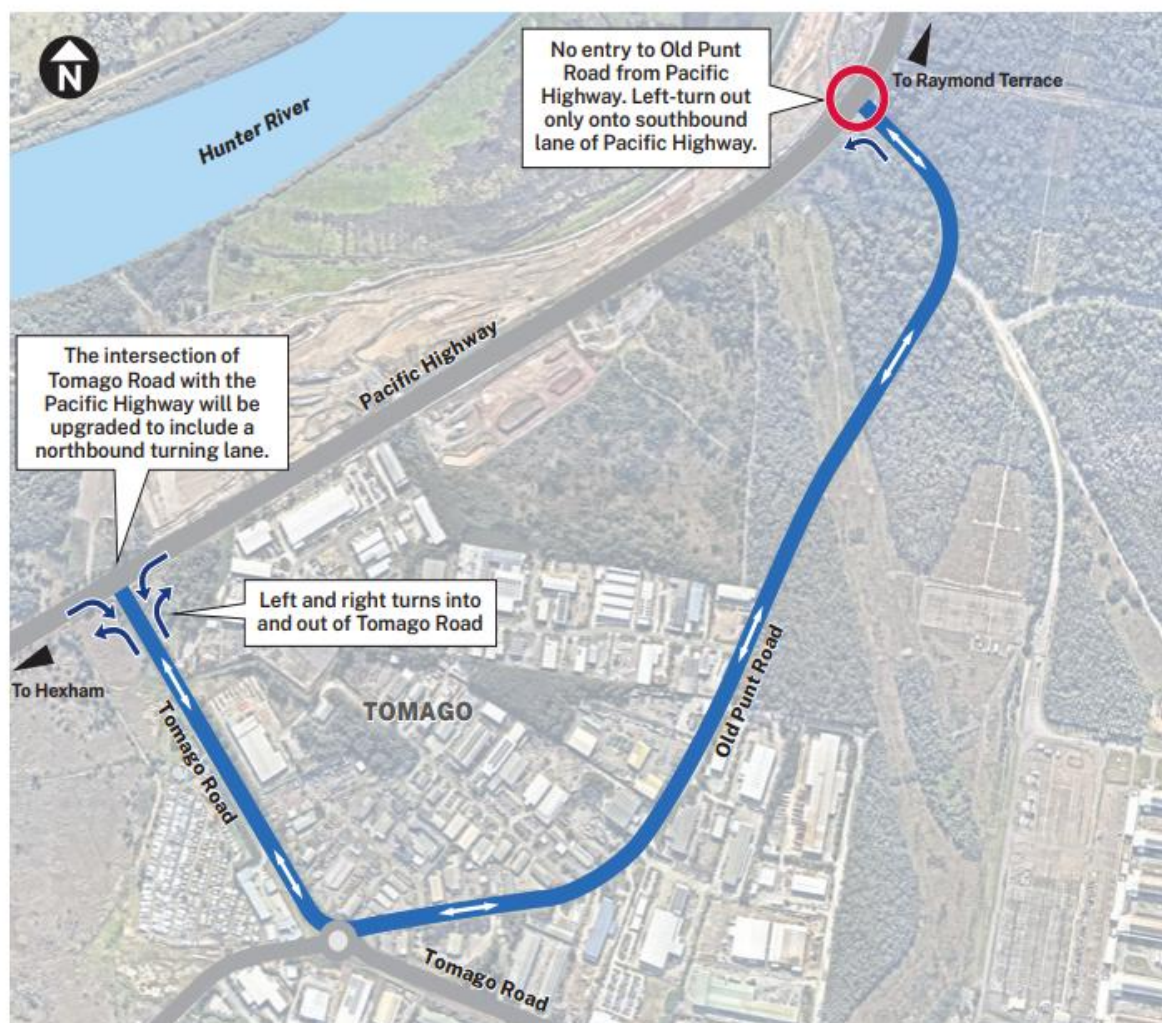


Figure 4 - Stage 2 traffic change

3.1.2 Impacts to heavy vehicle movements

A range of transport, freight, logistics, and heavy industry businesses are in the Tomago industrial area. In stakeholder meetings and via other feedback channels, business representatives raised concerns about the potential for the proposed traffic changes to restrict the movement of heavy vehicles. For example, in some cases the orientation of property driveways prevents property access for heavy vehicles travelling north along Old Punt Road. In other cases, in the event the traffic changes are implemented, heavy vehicles would be unable to turn into some properties without crossing the centreline due to the width of the road and insufficient heavy vehicle turning circles.

Some stakeholders identified issues with traffic and timing of regular deliveries which could impact overall operations as well as licensing considerations for different vehicle classes which would have to use the southern section of Old Punt Road.

A representative of a major transport company located in the Tomago industrial area explained this scenario in a survey response:

"Our vehicles are too big to enter site from one side. We have an existing traffic management plan to cater for this. We will need to be able to access both lanes of Old Punt Road to turn the vehicles into site if we have to approach from the southern end".

Response

The project team has revised its proposal to completely close Old Punt Road at the intersection with the Pacific Highway to a staged, partial closure. This will allow heavy vehicles exiting the Tomago area to exit via Old Punt Road to head south on the Pacific Highway, thereby reducing additional congestion and truck movements via Tomago Road roundabout. The project team also assisted with facilitating conversations between impacted businesses and relevant, external stakeholders (including Port Stephens Council, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and Newcastle Airport) to explain the need for the alternate route and ensure different heavy vehicle types can access Old Punt Road under the temporary arrangement.

3.1.3 Emergency access and egress

Some companies located in the Tomago industrial area handle and transport hazardous materials. During the 'Have your say' period, representatives of some of these businesses emphasised that their heavy vehicles which transport hazardous materials can only use Old Punt Road to access the Pacific Highway; they are not permitted to use Tomago Road to join the Pacific Highway. Subsequently, in the event the Old Punt Road and Pacific Highway intersection is temporarily closed, access and egress would be prevented.

The presence of hazardous materials on some properties in the Tomago industrial area and the proposed temporary closure of the Old Punt Road intersection with the Pacific Highway also posed a concern in relation to emergency incidents. Two issues were identified by the local businesses in the event of an emergency:

1. Emergency egress: the proposed traffic changes would create a congested route through the Tomago industrial estate, which could hinder the safe egress of staff or other people in the area. It would significantly impact risk levels if an emergency incident occurred.
2. Emergency services access: the proposed temporary closure of the Old Punt Road and Pacific Highway intersection may reduce the ability of emergency services to attend to the scene of an emergency in the Tomago industrial area.

Response

Transport recognises the critical importance of maintaining emergency access and safe transport conditions for all road users, particularly those handling hazardous materials. Emergency access and egress will be maintained at all times during the works, including through the construction area if required, in coordination with emergency services. Additionally, the decision to retain a left turn out onto the highway will allow vehicles exiting the Tomago area to exit via Old Punt Road to head south on the Pacific Highway, thereby reducing additional congestion and truck movements via Tomago Road roundabout.

3.1.4 Current and future condition of local road surfaces

Many of the people consulted during the 'Have Your Say' period raised concerns about the current and future condition of road surfaces in the Tomago industrial area. There are expectations that the condition of the roads will worsen if the proposed traffic changes are implemented. The feedback gathered from the online survey aligns with the comments collected during door-knocking and community pop-up stalls, such as:

"The road already has continuous pothole and asphalt damage problems. I'd suggest Old Punt Road would require some remedial road resurfacing works prior to the nine-month closure".

"If we are to use Old Punt Road it will need resurfacing, as it damaged already".

Response

The project team has undertaken preconstruction surveys of the road condition and has committed to return the road to Port Stephens Council in at least the same, if not better, condition. Prior to detouring traffic through this area, the team will assess the need to undertake any pre-emptive work (such as patching) in consultation with Port Stephens Council.

Transport acknowledges community concerns about the condition of local road surfaces in the Tomago industrial area and the potential for deterioration during the proposed detour period. In response, the project team has conducted preconstruction surveys to assess the current condition of the roads expected to carry detoured traffic.

Transport has committed to returning all affected roads to Port Stephens Council in **at least** the same condition as prior to the works, and where possible, in an improved state. Before the detour is implemented, the project team will evaluate the need for pre-emptive maintenance, in close consultation with Port Stephens Council. This proactive approach is intended to help minimise wear and tear on the road network and ensure a safe and reliable route for all road users throughout the construction period.

4. Preferred approach and next steps

4.1 Preferred approach

During the proposed temporary closure of Old Punt Road 'Have your say' period, the project team consulted a substantial number of businesses and residents in Tomago. The consultation activities aimed to understand business operations in the Tomago industrial area and identify potential support options that could be applied if Old Punt Road is temporarily closed.

As a result of the early consultation activities, Transport has a comprehensive understanding of:

- Road usage and preferences of businesses and residents
- Types of businesses and heavy vehicles that frequently utilise the local road network
- Primary and contingency traffic routes utilised by some businesses, including on the Pacific Highway, Tomago Road and Old Punt Road
- Volume and frequency of truck movements
- Materials carried by company vehicles.

Consultation with impacted businesses and relevant, external stakeholders (including Port Stephens Council, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and Newcastle Airport) provided the project team with valuable insights into the potential impacts of the proposed closure of Old Punt Road to the public. This collaborative process sought input from key stakeholders to help shape effective solutions, which have been incorporated into the final decision-making for the revised partial closure and implementation plan.

In response to the feedback received, the project team determined that the full, temporary closure of Old Punt Road would have substantial impacts on businesses operating in the area.

As a result, the construction method has been revised to a staged, partial closure. Stage 1 will be remove right hand turn movements into and out of Old Punt Road and will be in place for about six weeks. In Stage 2, only the left hand turn out of Old Punt Road (onto the southbound lane of the Pacific Highway) will be retained to allow traffic to exit the Tomago industrial area from both directions. Pacific Highway southbound traffic will not be able to turn left into Old Punt Road and will be detoured via Tomago Road.

The intersection of Tomago Road with the Pacific Highway will still be upgraded prior to Stage 1 of the partial closure to include a northbound turning lane. This approach will assist in reducing expected congestion from heavy vehicles at the Tomago Road roundabout.

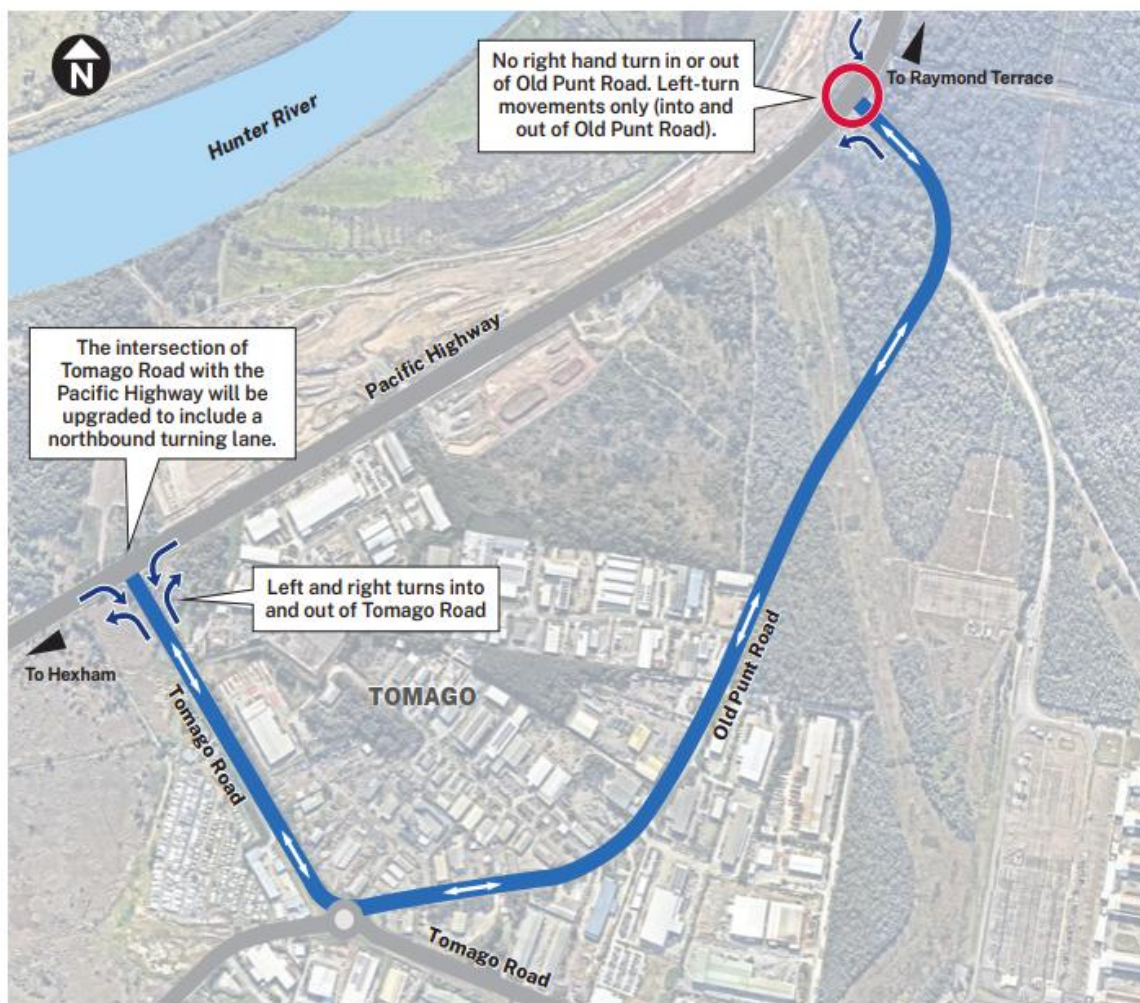


Figure 5 - Stage 1 traffic change

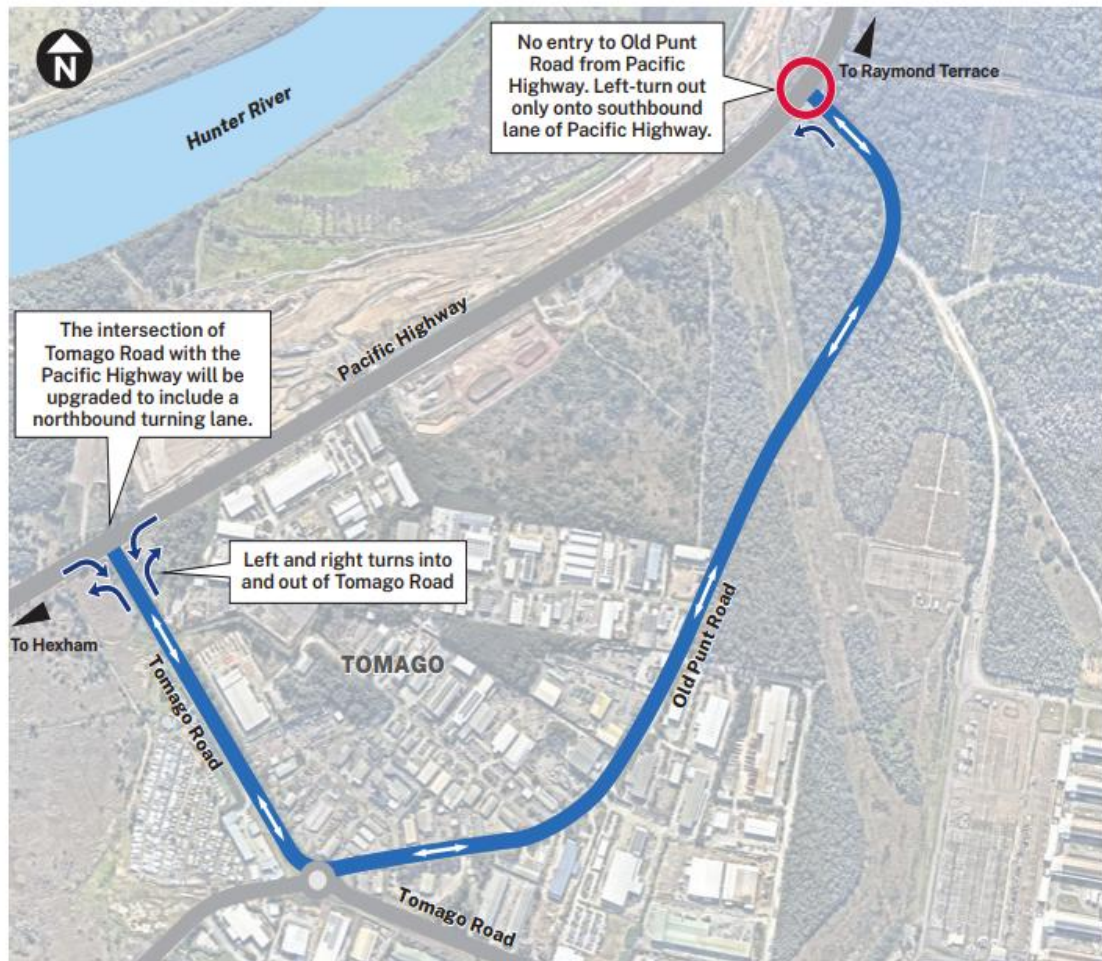


Figure 6 - Stage 2 traffic change

In addition, the project team will:

- Work with Port Stephens Council to maintain Old Punt Road during construction
- Work closely with stakeholders to ensure safe emergency access and egress
- Provide regular updates to all stakeholders regarding progress of the proposal and subsequent work dates.

4.2 Next Steps

Our next steps involve completion of upgrade to the intersection of Tomago Road with the Pacific Highway which includes construction of a northbound turning lane. The partial closure is planned to be implemented in late July 2025, weather permitting. We will maintain ongoing engagement with the community and key stakeholders, including the impacted businesses and relevant, external stakeholders (including Port Stephens Council, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and Newcastle Airport), to provide any updates on any future impacts as we progress towards the partial closure of Old Punt Road. For more information, you can contact the project team at:

Phone: 1800 094 895

Email: M12RT@transport.nsw.gov.au

Post: Locked Bag 2030, Newcastle NSW 2300

Visit: nswroads.work/m12rtportal



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