



M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace

Frequently Asked Questions

July 2021

This information has been developed to provide more detail about the display of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and to provide answers to frequently asked questions from stakeholders and the community.

The Australian and NSW governments have committed \$2 billion to deliver the M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace and Hexham Straight projects.

employment areas such as the Port of Newcastle, Newcastle Airport, Tomago, Beresfield and Black Hill.

Where is the project up to?

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) has placed the EIS on public exhibition from Wednesday 28 July until midnight on Tuesday 24 August.

What are the project benefits?

Key benefits of the project include:

- Improved connection between the M1 Motorway and A1 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
- Reducing traffic volumes on the existing road network, thereby improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists
- More efficient access to facilitate economic growth for the Lower Hunter and key regional

What are the key features of the project?

Key features of the project include:

- 15 kilometres of dual carriageway motorway with two lanes in each direction, bypassing Hexham and Heatherbrae
- Interchanges at Black Hill, Tomago, Tarro and Raymond Terrace
- A 2.6 kilometre viaduct over the Hunter River and floodplain, the Main North Rail Line, and the New England Highway
- Minimum flood immunity along the new roadway for a one in 20 year event.

What changes have been made to the concept design?

We have been investigating and developing the project since 2004. We have consulted the community on many occasions since then, with feedback helping to refine the concept design.



Community feedback has led to a number of design changes including:

New Tarro interchange design

- New merging lanes to improve traffic flow on the New England Highway
- Improved bridge structure which relocates the M1 northbound entry ramp over the New England Highway.

New Tomago interchange design

- Improved access to the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens
- Centralised interchange located at Old Punt Road to improve connectivity, road transport efficiency and safety for all motorists
- Improved access to the northbound entry ramp at Tomago which allows motorists from Newcastle to access the Motorway earlier.

What access is there to the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens?

We have consulted with the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens on many occasions since 2004 to improve the concept design. As a result, we have refined the design to allow motorists, pedestrians and cyclists direct access into and out of the gardens. This includes upgraded bus stop facilities and a set of traffic lights on the Pacific Highway. We will continue to work with the Gardens as the project progresses.

Will there be further design changes?

We will be guided by community and stakeholder feedback during the EIS process, and acknowledge some design changes may be required as a result of the submissions received.

We will keep the community informed of any further design changes.

How much will this project cost?

The Australian and NSW governments have committed \$2 billion to deliver the M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace and Hexham Straight projects.

When would construction of the project start?

Timing of construction will be dependent on planning approval. The proposal is expected to open to traffic in 2028.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

The EIS describes the key features of the project and assesses the potential environmental and social impacts during construction and operation. The EIS covers topics such as noise, vibration, traffic, air quality, flooding, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage, and socio-economic, agricultural property and biodiversity impacts. The EIS also makes recommendations on measures to manage and minimise potential impacts from the project.

The EIS is available on our interactive web portal at

<http://www.caportal.com.au/tfnsw/m1rt>.

How do I make a submission on the EIS?

All community and stakeholder feedback on the project is welcome. The community is encouraged to visit our [interactive web portal](#) to find out more information on the project.

All submissions must be made to DPIE before midnight Tuesday 24 August.

For more information on making a submission about this project read our



detailed factsheet, or call DPIE on **1300 305 695**.

What happens next?

After the public exhibition has closed, DPIE will provide Transport for NSW with a copy of all submissions received.

Transport will then prepare a submissions report to respond to the issues raised during the public exhibition. This report will include any proposed changes to the project in response to the submissions received.

The submissions report will be made publicly available for stakeholders and the community to view.

The report will be submitted to DPIE and helps to inform the Minister for Planning's decision on the project.

If the project is approved by the Minister for Planning, it will be constructed and operated in accordance with the mitigation measures described in the EIS and the Minister's Conditions of Approval.

The plans proposed in the EIS may evolve, depending on several factors including community feedback and the construction methodologies developed by the contractors, once appointed.

How have stakeholders and the community been involved so far?

We recognise the M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace design is important to the community.

Since the release of the preferred route and concept design in 2016, we have engaged with many community members and stakeholders who live and work near the project area. We have listened to better understand your concerns and have incorporated your feedback and

suggestions into our design where possible.

Design refinements have been made as a direct result of consultation and reflect our long history of consultation as part of this project, which started in 2004 when the M1 Pacific Motorway Planning Strategy was announced.

An extensive consultation program has been carried out since planning started in 2004. Consultation has included public displays, discussions with potentially affected land owners and a community liaison group to help identify the preferred route and develop a concept design.

I live near the proposed project. How might this affect me?

We have identified properties impacted and potentially impacted by the project. We will contact you directly if we need to enter your property to carry out field investigations to help gather information needed in the development of the project.

We also need to acquire privately owned land as part of developing the project. A property is described as being 'directly affected' by a project when Transport for NSW needs to acquire part or all of it in order to deliver the project.

We have contacted all directly affected landowners, and continue to consult with them about the impacts to their land. Compensation to landowners directly impacted by the project (full or partial acquisitions) is governed by the *Just Terms Compensation Act 1991*.

Further information on the process used for property acquisition can be found at <https://www.propertyacquisition.nsw.gov.au/property-acquisition-process>.



What if you find Aboriginal artefacts or sites on my property?

We will liaise directly with all landowners if Aboriginal artefacts or sites are found on your land. If we find an Aboriginal artefact or site, we will leave it where it is and report the artefact and its location to the DPIE.

Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW is protected by the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. Under the Act it is an offence to harm (destroy, deface, or damage) or desecrate an Aboriginal object or Aboriginal place, or in relation to an object, move the object from the land on which it has been situated.

How have you assessed potential impacts to Aboriginal heritage?

Transport follows a four-stage process of consultation and investigation to assess known or potential impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage. The process includes.

- Assessing if the project could impact Aboriginal cultural heritage, identifying if further assessment is necessary
- Surveying the project area
- Formal consultation and preparing a Cultural Heritage Assessment Report
- Post-approval implementation of management recommendations identified in the assessment and consultation.

At all stages, local Aboriginal stakeholders and a suitably qualified archaeologist have been engaged to assist the project team. The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Report and Cultural Values Assessment report are included in the EIS.

Archaeological assessment for the project included desktop assessment, field survey, test excavation and assessment of significance. A total of 446 test pits were

excavated in 15 different locations within the study area. In total, 3026 stone artefacts were recovered during the test excavation program and later analysed.

A total of 26 Aboriginal archaeological sites and potential archaeological deposits in the construction footprint have been identified as being directly impacted by the project. The sites were assessed as having a range of low to high archaeological significance, depending on the location.

How have you considered the impacts to businesses in Beresfield, Tomago and Heatherbrae?

We understand the concerns of business owners and operators in the project area.

A business survey was carried out in 2016 to gather information to understand the potential impacts on businesses.

While the project would result in a reduction in traffic through Heatherbrae and possible decrease in passing trade for some businesses, the project would improve local amenity due to the reduced traffic volumes and subsequent reduced traffic noise, enhanced road safety and making it more attractive for people to walk, cycle and drive.

What impacts will the project have on the environment?

The project has sought to avoid and minimise environmental impacts through the options selection and design process and would continue to do so during detailed design.

Where potential impacts could not be avoided, appropriate environmental management measures have been identified to manage these impacts.



How much vegetation will be removed and how will you compensate for this?

About 174 hectares of native vegetation would be removed, including four threatened flora species.

A biodiversity offset strategy has been prepared to address unavoidable residual impacts.

How will you protect wildlife?

The concept design has been developed to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity wherever possible.

The proposal includes provision of five overhead fauna crossing structures and more than six kilometres of fauna exclusion fencing.

How have you assessed potential impacts to the Port Stephens koala population?

Targeted koala surveys were carried out in 2015, 2016 and 2019. There were no observations of koalas during these surveys, and no evidence of koala activity in potential habitat areas within the construction footprint.

Although the project would result in minimal impact to fauna connectivity, the project would remove 51.12 hectares of vegetation types that contain koala feed tree species in the Tomago to Heatherbrae area of the project. This removal of vegetation has been included in our biodiversity offset strategy.

The project has been designed to be located close to adjoining existing roads and industrial areas, resulting in minimal impacts on the movements of koalas.

The project is not expected to significantly impact on the koala.

The small area of habitat area to be lost along the edge of the existing Pacific Highway between Tomago and Heatherbrae is unlikely to result in a long-term decrease in the size of the Port Stephens koala population.

See **Chapter 9** in the EIS for more information.

How will construction dust be managed?

The effects of airborne dust during construction would be temporary and of relatively short duration. For all construction work, we aim to prevent dust-related impacts through the implementation of best practice management measures, including:

- Suppressing dust with water
- Covering stockpiles of loose materials or applying seeding and temporary vegetation cover if stored for longer periods
- Cleaning up loose materials from hard surfaces
- Selecting equipment and materials handling techniques that minimise the potential for dust generation.

How have you assessed noise?

As part of the EIS, the potential noise and vibration impacts during construction and operation of the project have been assessed in accordance with relevant NSW noise and vibration guidelines.

A detailed noise assessment was carried out to evaluate and predict the potential impact of construction and operation. Noise monitoring and traffic counts were carried out to measure traffic noise from the existing road network. A computer-based noise model was used to simulate the existing noise environment, predict future traffic noise levels and assess the need for noise mitigation measures.



See **Chapter 8** in the EIS for more information.

Will I be eligible for noise treatment?

Some properties would be eligible for consideration of at house noise mitigation. These properties are identified in the EIS's noise and vibration assessment. Eligible property owners would be contacted by the project team to discuss possible mitigation measures before construction starts.

Will the removal of trees increase noise levels?

No. Trees do not generally provide an effective noise barrier unless there is a substantial width of vegetation. While trees can help provide a visual barrier against the source of noise and this effect alone can be a powerful mitigation tool, it cannot be relied upon to reduce measured noise levels.

We do not include the benefit of vegetation not protected from potential future development when designing noise mitigation to meet noise objectives.

Will there be trucks on my local road?

Visit our [interactive web portal](#) which maps out potential construction traffic routes.

There is also more detailed information in **Chapter 7** and **Appendix G** in the EIS.

Will construction work create more traffic delays during peak periods and school start/finish times?

There could be some localised delays on existing roads at peak times during construction. However, the completed project is expected to reduce existing traffic demand which would improve travel times and reliability.

How can I make a complaint during construction?

A complaints management procedure would be implemented before the start of construction, in addition to a Community Communication Strategy. This would include measures for responding to complaints and the establishment of an 1800 telephone number maintained at all times (24 hours a day).

How will I get on and off the new motorway if I live in Newcastle / Maitland / Raymond Terrace?

The project has been designed to allow for motorists to enter and exit the motorway at key locations, including for those travelling from Newcastle.

Motorists travelling to and from Newcastle will continue to use the existing Hexham Bridges, with entry and exit ramps to the new Motorway provided north of Tomago Road on the Pacific Highway.

Our [interactive web portal](#) includes several videos which show how the project and the interchanges would work.

Will you use Australian products such as Australian steel?

The project would implement an Australian Industry Participation Plan and a Local Industry Participation Plan in accordance with Australian and NSW government requirements, which would identify opportunities for how the project will use local materials.

Will there be any tolls on the road when completed?

There are no plans to implement a toll on the completed road.

How many jobs would the project create?

The project would create and support about 2700 jobs during construction,



including employment for about 1050 workers and about 1650 indirect jobs with businesses that supply goods and services to support construction.

What will be the posted speed limit of the new road?

The new motorway will have a posted speed limit of 110km/h.

Upgrades of existing roads such as the New England Highway at Tarro and Pacific Highway at Tomago and Heatherbrae would remain the same speed limit as they are now.

How much time will I save off my journey once the project is built?

The project is expected to save you up to nine minutes of travel time during peak periods.

Will there be any traffic lights left between Sydney and Brisbane after this project is finished?

No. When both this project and the Coffs Harbour bypass are completed there will not be any traffic lights for motorists travelling the M1 Pacific Motorway and A1 Pacific Highway from Sydney to Brisbane.

What is happening with other projects in the area?

Transport is continuing to develop the concept design and environmental assessment for the Hexham Straight project. We plan to display the environmental assessment for community feedback later this year.

Timing of construction is not confirmed and is dependent on a range of factors including planning approval.

We are working closely with the team planning the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor. You can contact the team by emailing corridors@transport.nsw.gov.au

or calling 1800 837 511. More information is available at transport.nsw.gov.au/LHFC.