

Design Review Working Group

Progress update

May 2025

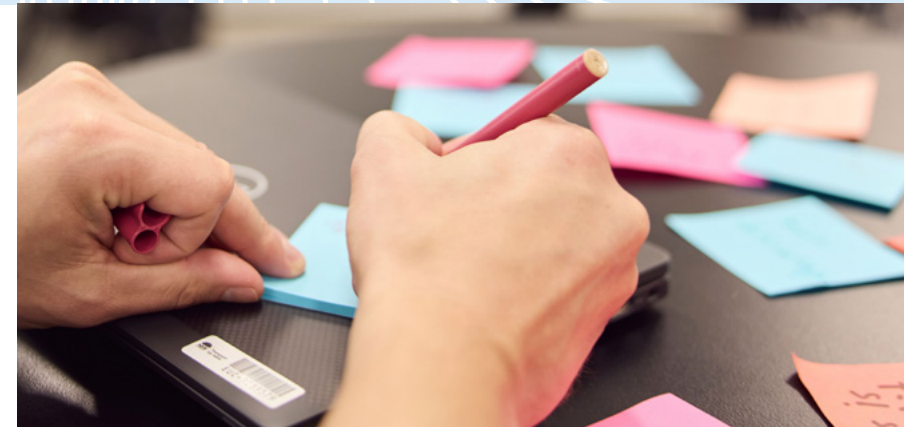
Transport is committed to working in partnership with industry to improve the way we deliver projects for the people of NSW. Through our Industry Affairs program, we are working with the Australian Constructors Association (ACA), Consult Australia (CA) and the Civil Contractors Federation (CCF) NSW to jointly improve the productivity, sustainability and capacity of the industry.

Improving the Design Review process

Through 2024, industry and Transport identified an opportunity to simplify and improve the design review process. A Design Review program with Working Groups was established, leveraging 17 organisations to collectively identify and co-design process improvements. The Working Groups were focused on:

- The development and implementation of agreed collaboration framework on projects;
- Obtaining clarity of the Independent Certifier / Independent Verifier role;
- Enhancing the prequalification schemes for industry to work with TfNSW; and
- Improvements to the concessions management process.

The Design Review Working Group was officially closed out in August 2024 and presented at a joint Industry Affairs session with the ACA, CA and CCF.



Update on implementation

To promote transparency with our industry stakeholders, the following document has been developed as an update on the implementation of the measures jointly adopted with industry.

Following industry confirmation, it is intended that the actioned recommendations be archived, enabling continued focus on the remaining in progress actions.

Status	Ref	Recommendation	Summary
C	F1.1	Roll out 2023 design review process recommendations on pilot projects (Epping Bridge & M5 Westbound widening).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum Technical Solution (MTS) trialled to develop Scope of Works and Technical Criteria (SWTC) and Collaboration Plan (including recommendations from the Design Working Group). TfNSW developed Design Review Guidelines, in use on several projects and a template version for industry review is being finalised. The new Design Review Guidelines will be published on the Transport Infrastructure Industry Portal by Q3 2025.
C	F1.2	Ensure 2023 design review process recommendations are incorporated in the next round of projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MTS being used for new D&C projects.
C	F1.3	Develop an industry wide communication strategy to share the findings, recommendations and actions identified in the design review Working Groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be released at the Transport for NSW InMotion Conference, August 12, 2025.
C	F1.4	Incorporate 2023 and 2024 design review process recommendations into procurement documentation for future projects (eg Minimum Technical Solution –SWTC and PS Specs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MTS updated to include baseline SWTC and PS Specifications. Supporting internal Transport change management governance process underway.
C	F1.5	Adjust commercial approach to avoid premature release of Construct Only design tenders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covered by existing procurement processes and approvals.
P	F1.6	Establish interface agreements with stakeholders and third parties to ensure design review occurs in agreed commercial project timelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that some interface agreements are in existence already (e.g utility providers). Further work is required to continue to respond to this action.
P	F1.7	Develop and implement a transition strategy, including pilot projects, to potentially move projects from drawings based to using models for construction and asset deliverables. (also requires Legal support).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TfNSW currently reviewing retrospective completed projects to identify opportunities for where drawings could have been replaced by a digital model at each stage of the design process (ModelState).
C	F2.1	TfNSW to develop and implement a risk assessment process to determine the appropriate level of internal and external (independent) review, verification and certification services for each project in the pre-delivery pipeline to reduce duplication between IC/IV, TfNSW and the Contractor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TfNSW have developed a risk assessment tool for IC/IV services based on the recommendations provided. This is currently being trialled on M5 Westbound and Richmond Bridge projects and is available to be used on new projects.

P	F2.2	TfNSW to clarify roles and accountabilities during design review either as part of the Contract, and/or in design review guidelines that are followed by all parties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TfNSW have developed Internal Design Review Guidelines for several current Tier 1 projects, including but not limited to M1 to Raymond Terrace and Western Harbour Tunnel. TfNSW is currently developing a template that can be used for individual projects which will include items on design review roles, time frames, comment training and tools. Consultation will be undertaken with industry to ensure alignment internally and externally in the second half of 2025.
C	F2.3	TfNSW to continue to improve efficiencies of the design review process and improve the quality of design review due diligence (e.g. minimal technical solution/requirements management, develop design review guideline(s) to support project culture, collaboration, role understanding, obligations (safety, environmental & whole of life), design review planning/coordination, design review timeframes, design review tools, and SME design review comment training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MTS updated to include baseline SWTC and PS Specifications. Baseline MTS being finalised from the trial projects and confirming change approval process for the baseline (and for project application) which will then be communicated with industry. TfNSW have developed Internal Design Review Guidelines for several current Tier 1 projects, including but not limited to M1 to Raymond Terrace and Western Harbour Tunnel. wTfNSW is currently developing a template that can be used for individual projects which will include items on design review roles, time frames, comment training and tools. Consultation on the template with industry will be undertaken to ensure alignment internally and externally.
P	F2.4	TfNSW to explore the implementation of procurement and commercial improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TfNSW had drafted a new template procurement with reduced submission requirements. This template is being rolled out on projects. TfNSW has amended scope and conditions reducing legal risk to the IC/IV. TfNSW has updated our template to be a lump sum with KPI's as requested. TfNSW commits to continue to consider feedback from industry.
P	F2.5	Continue to consult and inform the industry on progress of the recommendation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing action.
P	F3.1	Reduced and scalable tendering effort (utilization of the 'Buy. NSW' portal).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TfNSW has removed requirements for pre-qualifications for IC/IV. TfNSW will continue to consider the role of pre-qualifications in design procurements.
P	F3.2	Improving submission quality through feedback and effective engagement.	
P	F3.3	Examination of 'barriers to entry'.	
P	F3.4	Improved pre-qualification references in RFX documentation.	
P	F3.5	Examine 'Service Types' in PQ schemes –opportunities to better support the portfolio.	

C	F4.1	Industry engagement confirmed that most concerns are addressed with Concession Standard V3 and new TERM Tiering Tool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes have been made to address the majority of the issues raised by industry.
P	F4.2.1	TfNSW to improve contract documentation to better reflect the requirements to utilise the concession process for departures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concession process for departures has been included within the MTS.
P	F4.2.2	TfNSW to introduce 'conditionally accepted concessions'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This process has been included in MTS and IP-0050. Currently being updated to provide additional TfNSW guidance on how to manage these concessions.
P	F4.2.3	TfNSW to apply the concessions process consistently state-wide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AMB concessions portal is driving a more consistent state-wide approach. Road design Technical SME workshops are also driving consistency in assessment of RD concessions.
P	F4.2.4	TfNSW to improve guidance on timeframes, roles & responsibilities, responsibility of asset steward (especially low risk concessions).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TS 00003.1 Version 3 -Concessions to Transport Standards contains improved guidance as has contract provisions. IP-0050 is being updated to provide additional TfNSW guidance.
C	F4.2.5	TfNSW to continue to provide information and feedback sessions for internal and external stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TfNSW Asset Management Branch (AMB) have run information sessions on these with both internal and external stakeholders.
C	F4.3.1	Industry to submit concession as soon as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being actioned by industry.
C	F4.3.2	Industry to proactively seek clarification.	
C	F4.3.3	Industry to provide feedback.	

Next steps

The Design Review Working Group recommending will continue to be considered, with regular updates provided through the Industry Engagement program and via the [Transport Infrastructure Industry Portal](#).

Questions relating to the Design Review Working Group or Industry Affairs program can be directed to IED@Transport.nsw.gov.au.