

Nelson Bay Road Upgrade – Williamstown to Bobs Farm

Community Consultation Report

Transport for NSW | March 2020

Executive summary

Transport for NSW (Transport) is currently planning for the duplication of Nelson Bay Road from Williamtown to Bobs Farm (W2BF) as the next priority for the corridor. It is considering both on-line and off-line route alignment options. The project would provide two lanes in each direction and would improve safety and travel times on Nelson Bay Road.

This Community Consultation Report provides a summary of the community consultation on the route alignment options for W2BF, carried out by Transport from 20 September 2019 to 11 October 2019. Late submissions about the proposal were accepted until Monday 2 December and are also included in this report.

The W2BF project involves work in two sections of Nelson Bay Road:

- Williamtown to Salt Ash
- Salt Ash to Bobs Farm.

The key features are:

- two lanes in each direction
- improved intersection access
- improved shoulders for cyclists
- minimum 80km/h design.

The W2BF project would provide the following key benefits:

- Better connectivity for residents, businesses and the community to Newcastle airport and Williamtown RAAF base
- Improved traffic flow, journey times and safety for motorists on Nelson Bay Road
- Improved pedestrian and cyclist safety
- Support for tourism and rural industries as major economic drivers in the Port Stephens area.

Two primary route alignment options are being considered for the project:

- Williamtown to Salt Ash
 - Option A on-line – Five kilometres of duplication on the existing road alignment
 - Option B off-line – Five kilometres of dual carriageway on a new alignment
- Salt Ash to Bobs Farm
 - Option A on-line – 4.6 kilometres of duplication on the existing road alignment
 - Option B off-line – 4.1 kilometres of dual carriageway on a new alignment.

The majority of submissions received by Transport during the consultation period nominated route alignment option A (online) as being preferred.

There was support and opposition to each of the route alignment options. Key issues raised included:

- Loss of property and/or property functionality (including farming operations)
- Financial loss as a result of upgrade

- The reduction of construction traffic
- A safer alignment and construction environment
- The potential for flooding and drainage.

These issues are being considered carefully during the preferred route alignment option decision-making process.

The decision

Transport is currently investigating alternative route options for the Nelson Bay Road duplication project that were suggested by the community during this consultation period. Transport will keep the community informed as planning progresses and once these investigations have been completed will carry out further consultation with key stakeholders and the community.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The NSW Government is investing \$275 million to improve safety and travel times on Nelson Bay Road. The duplication of Nelson Bay Road to provide two lanes in each direction is being delivered as a program of work.

Early work includes the upgrade of the intersection of Nelson Bay Road and Medowie Road which was completed in June 2019. The next stage of early work involves upgrading the Nelson Bay Road and Lemon Tree Passage Road intersection which is planned to start in December 2019.

Transport is currently planning for the duplication of Nelson Bay Road from Williamstown to Bobs Farm (W2BF) as the next priority for the corridor and is considering both on-line and off-line route alignment options. An on-line route would follow the existing Nelson Bay Road alignment. An off-line route would follow a new road alignment.

1.2. The proposal

The W2BF project involves two sections:

1. Duplicating about five kilometres of Nelson Bay Road from the Williamstown roundabout to the existing section of duplication, just south of Richardson Road (Williamstown to Salt Ash – W2SA)
2. Duplicating about four kilometres of Nelson Bay Road from Lemon Tree Passage Road to the existing section of duplication adjacent Worimi National Park (Salt Ash to Bob's Farm – SA2BF).

Key features of the project are:

- Providing two lanes in each direction
- Improved intersection access
- Improved shoulders for cyclists
- Minimum 80km/h design.
- Bridging over Tilligery Creek.

2. Consultation approach

2.1. Consultation objectives

We consulted with the community and key stakeholders on the proposal to:

- Inform the community and stakeholders of the proposal and possible impacts;
- Seek feedback on the proposal and issues of concern for consideration in developing the preferred route alignment; and
- Build a database of interested and concerned community members with whom we can continue to engage during the development of the W2BF.

2.2. Values

Our values underpin our decisions and behaviours when working with customers, colleagues, stakeholders and partners.

- **Customer focus** - We place the customer at the centre of everything we do
- **Collaboration** - We value each other and create better outcomes by working together
- **Solutions** - We deliver sustainable and innovative solutions to NSW's transport needs
- **Integrity** - We take responsibility and communicate openly
- **Safety** - We prioritise safety for our people and our customers.

2.3. How consultation was done

We consulted with the community on the route alignment options for the W2BF project over a three-week period from 20 September 2019 to 11 October 2019. Community members were encouraged to provide their feedback and leave comments via mail, email, or phone contact with the project team. We also directly consulted a number key stakeholders via individual meetings. Our key consultation tools are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

W2BF Have your say – Route alignment options project update (September 2019)	4900 Have your say project updates were hand delivered to letter boxes in Williamstown, Salt Ash and Bobs Farm in mid-September 2019. A copy of the project update is provided in Appendix A .
Facebook advertisement	A paid Facebook advertisement was uploaded to the Transport Facebook page and shared by Kate Washington, MP. An extract of the post is provided in Appendix B .
Media release	A media release covering the project was issued by Transport. It was subsequently published by the <i>Port Stephens Examiner</i> and the <i>Tanilba Bay Newsletter</i> .
Email notifications	Direct emails were sent by Transport staff to key stakeholders including the Williamstown per-and-poly-fluoro alkyl substances (PFAS) Working Group, two service stations affected by the proposal, Williamstown RAAF Base Commander and Infrastructure Management group, Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), Newcastle Airport – staff, contractors and businesses, Williamstown RAAF Base – staff, contractors and businesses, Hunter Freight Group, Port Stephens Council, and Kate Washington MP.

Newspaper advertisement	An advertisement covering the project was published in the <i>Port Stephens Examiner</i> on 26 September 2019 and is included in Appendix C .
Consultation with key stakeholders	Transport staff attended meetings and consulted with key stakeholders including Hunter Water, Worimi LALC, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, Port Stephens Council, Port Stephens Buses, Williamstown RAAF Base, and a small number of property owners upon request.

We also contacted potentially affected property owners and businesses who had not responded to the initial opportunity to provide comment on the proposed route alignment options by direct mail. The closing date for the consultation period was extended to give property and business owners the opportunity to respond.

All feedback received up to 2 December 2019 has been included in this report.

3. Consultation summary

3.1. Overview

Comments on the W2BF Have your say closed on Friday 11 October 2019, with 98 submissions received about a range of issues. Late submissions were also accepted and are included in this report. Some submissions included multiple comments and raised multiple issues.

There was support and opposition to each of the route alignment options. Key issues raised included:

- Loss of property and/or property functionality (including farming operations)
- Financial loss as a result of the upgrade
- Minimising construction traffic
- A safer alignment and construction environment
- The potential for flooding and drainage issues.

The Transport Facebook post attracted a large number of visitors and achieved the following statistics:

- 54,448 reach
- 65,939 impressions
- 1.21 frequency
- 34 post reactions
- 33 post shares
- 2,529 clicks
- 23 comments.

The Facebook post shared on the page of Kate Washington, MP, also attracted visitors and interaction. The Facebook comments and issues raised by Facebook users were generally consistent with those made via the Have your say submissions. The next section of this report contains a summary of the submissions.

Some submissions received by Transport were outside the scope of W2BF. They included:

- Excessive tourism in the surrounding area
- Road development generally

- Road maintenance and installing speed humps on Marsh Road
- Flooding on Marsh Road
- Duplication of Cabbage Tree Road
- Building a bridge connecting Lemon Tree Passage Road and Soldiers Point
- Closing Nelson Bay Road between Medowie Road and Richardson Road, and a traffic diversion via Richardson Road and Medowie Road.

These submissions have been noted and forwarded to the appropriate Transport representative for investigation and response where required.

3.2. Have your say submissions

Table 2 contains a summary of the submissions received by Transport during the Have your say period. It includes the range of issue categories, the number of submissions made under each category, a description of the issues raised, and the Transport response.

Table 2

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Transport response
Alternate route option	2	Suggestion that route alignment option B (offline) would be better located to the north of the existing Nelson Bay Road alignment	W2SA: Land to the north of Nelson Bay Road has constraints that would substantially complicate this option. An alignment through this area would have substantially greater impacts to biodiversity, including and in particular, fragmentation/connectivity impacts to core koala habitat in the Tilligerry State Conservation Area and other threatened ecological communities and potential threatened species habitat. SA2BF: Land to the north of Nelson Bay Road has constraints including coastal wetland that would substantially complicate this option. This route would create a longer and less direct road.
	1	Suggestion for the upgrade to be part of a long-term regional road design, from Swansea to Nelson Bay via the inner-city bypass	This suggestion is outside the scope of the W2BF project.
	5	Suggestion to create an offline route closer to the coastline than the proposed routes, bypassing Salt Ash	This suggestion is being investigated by the project team. More information about the outcome of the investigations will be provided to the community as the project progresses.
	1	Suggestion to create a connection from Masonite Road to Richardson Road (at Finnan Park) via Hunter Water owned property, as part of the M1 Motorway upgrade	This is outside the scope of the W2BF project and doesn't meet the project objectives. This comment has been referred to the Transport network planning team and the M1 to Raymond Terrace project team for consideration.
Property	31	Concern about property acquisition, including the division of properties	Transport would need to acquire properties or part of properties to build the Nelson Bay Road upgrade. The impact on individual properties would not be known until a preferred route is chosen and further investigations and design are completed. Acquisition generally would not start until the project is approved

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Transport response
			<p>for construction. Construction approval would not be granted until a preferred route is selected, a concept design finalised and an environmental assessment completed and displayed.</p> <p>Affected landowners are encouraged to contact the project team to discuss their individual circumstances, including the process of acquisition. Hardship cases would be considered in line with the Just Terms legislation following confirmation of the preferred route alignment.</p> <p>If acquisition were required, Transport would contact directly affected land owners to initiate a process of consultation and negotiation. Transport strives to work with landowners and prefers to achieve a mutually acceptable agreement for purchase.</p> <p>Further information on the process used for property acquisition can be found at: www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documents/projects/factsheet-property-acquisition.pdf</p>
	9	Concern about loss of property, fragmentation of property and /or impact on the operation of cattle farming businesses	<p>Once a preferred route is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. This would include a socio-economic study to assess potential impacts on agriculture and farming. In addition, Transport is exploring design options to manage the impact on cattle farming businesses.</p> <p>The Transport property team would contact property owners to discuss property acquisitions once the preferred route has been selected.</p>
	5	Concern about loss of agricultural property and the impact on the operation of agricultural businesses and hobby farms	<p>Transport acknowledges that route alignment option B would result in fragmentation of some parcels of land and would require some property acquisition. Once a preferred route is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. This would include a socio-economic study to assess potential impacts on agriculture and farming.</p> <p>The Transport property team would contact property owners to discuss property acquisitions once the preferred route has been selected. Transport strives to work with landowners to achieve a mutually acceptable agreement for property acquisitions, where required.</p> <p>In addition, Transport is exploring design options to manage the impact on agricultural businesses and hobby farms.</p>
	2	Concern about property investment uncertainty	<p>The impact on individual properties will not be known until a preferred route is chosen and further investigations and designs are completed.</p> <p>Affected landowners are encouraged to contact the project team to discuss their individual circumstances, including the process of acquisition. Hardship cases would be considered in line with the Just Terms legislation following confirmation of the preferred route.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Transport response
			Further information on the process Transport uses for property acquisition can be found at: www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documentation/projects/factsheet-property-acquisition.pdf
	1	Request for the provision of a cattle underpass for the W2SA section of the upgrade	Transport is exploring design options to manage the impact of the project on farming operations for agricultural businesses.
	3	Comment that route alignment option B (offline) would improve property access	Transport acknowledges that building route alignment option B (offline) would reduce the volume of vehicles on the existing Nelson Bay Road and therefore would improve safety of property accesses.
	3	Request for existing property vehicular access to be maintained, including in any deceleration or turning lanes	Transport is exploring design options to manage the impact on property accesses. Existing heavy vehicle access would be maintained.
Impact on business/trade	11	Concern about financial loss as a result of upgrade (local business)	Transport acknowledges that building route alignment option B (off-line) would impact on passing trade for some local businesses. Once a preferred route is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. This would include a socio-economic study to assess potential impacts on businesses, agriculture and farming. Transport will continue to consult with local businesses and farming operations that have concerns with regard to loss of revenue.
	4	Concern about financial loss as a result of upgrade (regional economy)	The Nelson Bay Road program of work would have a positive impact on the regional economy by improving connectivity between Newcastle and Port Stephens for private commuters, public transport and commercial activities. This includes improved access to Newcastle Airport, Williamtown RAAF base, sand mining operations and other port based industries and tourism activities. Once a preferred route is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. This would include a socio-economic study to assess potential impacts on the regional economy. Transport will continue to consult with local businesses that have concerns with regard to loss of revenue.
	3	Concern about loss of local employment	Transport acknowledges that building route alignment option B (off-line) would impact on passing trade for some local businesses which may in turn impact on local employment. Once a preferred route is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. This would include a socio-economic study to assess potential impacts on local employment. Transport will continue to consult with local businesses that have concerns with regard to loss of local employment. With regard to businesses in the Pauls Corner complex, the current proposal does not include any changes to the existing roundabout. Roads and Maritime are currently investigating alternative route options that

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Transport response
			<p>were suggested by the community during this consultation period. We will continue to keep the community informed as planning progresses.</p> <p>There may be some impact to traffic at this location during construction of the project, however Transport would work closely with local business owners during construction to minimise impacts on their businesses and customers.</p>
	2	Concern about loss/preservation of farm business revenue (cattle or other farming)	<p>Transport acknowledges that building route alignment option B (offline) would cause fragmentation of some land parcels and land use.</p> <p>Once a preferred route is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. This would include a socio-economic study to assess potential impacts on businesses, agriculture and farming.</p>
Community	4	Suggestion that the upgrade will disrupt community services provided by affected businesses	<p>Once a preferred route is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. This would include a socio-economic study to assess potential socio-economic impacts of the project.</p>
	7	Insufficient time/detail provided to community	<p>Transport is committed to actively engaging with the community and stakeholders in the planning and construction of road projects. Transport is continuing to consult with the community and stakeholders about the Nelson Bay Road upgrade and will provide more detailed information as planning for the project progresses.</p> <p>Community members who have provided feedback through our comment period have been added to our database to receive future information about the project. Community members can request to be added to our database by emailing nelsonbayroad@rms.nsw.gov.au.</p> <p>In response to concerns about the length of the display period, submissions from the community were accepted after the submission closing date and Transport is continuing to provide additional information and consult with affected property owners.</p>
	1	Request for the provision of easy and safe bus access	<p>Transport is consulting with bus operators about bus routes and the location of bus stops.</p> <p>The community would be notified about any proposed changes to bus routes or bus stops.</p>
	6	Route alignment option A (online) would be a more efficient expenditure of public funds	<p>An economic analysis focusing on travel time savings, safety improvements and vehicle operating costs is being carried out as part of the options assessment in accordance with Transport for NSW economic analysis guidelines.</p> <p>Further cost/benefit analysis would occur once a preferred option is selected and more design and investigations are carried out.</p>
	5	Route alignment option B (offline) would be a more efficient	<p>An economic analysis focusing on travel time savings, safety improvements and vehicle operating costs is being carried out as part of the options assessment in</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Transport response
		expenditure of public funds	<p>accordance with Transport for NSW economic analysis guidelines.</p> <p>Further cost/benefit analysis would occur once a preferred option is selected and more design and investigations are carried out.</p>
	7	Upgrade is essential for the community	We thank community members for their support and interest in the Nelson Bay Road upgrade program.
	1	Concern that route alignment option B (offline) would have negative impacts for future residential property development	<p>The impact on individual properties will not be known until a preferred route is chosen and further investigations and designs are completed.</p> <p>Affected landowners are encouraged to contact the project team to discuss their individual circumstances, including the process of acquisition. Hardship cases would be considered in line with the Just Terms legislation following confirmation of the preferred route.</p> <p>Further information on the process Transport uses for property acquisition can be found at: www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documentation/projects/factsheet-property-acquisition.pdf</p>
Environment	9	Concern about the route alignment option B (offline) destroying wildlife and wildlife habitat	<p>Preliminary ecological studies have been conducted to identify significant flora and wildlife habitat near the route alignment options. Both options would have some environmental impacts that would be managed.</p> <p>Once a preferred route alignment is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed and displayed. This would include assessment of the impact on wildlife and wildlife habitat.</p>
	1	Concern about the SA2BF route alignment option A (online) interfering with frog habitat	Preliminary ecological studies have been conducted to identify significant flora and wildlife habitat near the route alignment options. Once a preferred route is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed and displayed. This would include assessment of the impact on frogs.
	10	Concern about potential flooding and drainage issues created by route alignment option B (offline)	Preliminary flood studies have been conducted to identify hydrology patterns near the route alignment options. Additional flooding and hydrology studies would be conducted to inform the design and minimise impacts of flooding and drainage once the preferred route alignment is selected.
	1	Concern about the SA2BF route alignment option A (online) creating a bushfire risk	The concern has been noted by the project team; however it is not evident how the online option would increase bushfire risk in the area.
	1	Concern about the SA2BF route alignment option A (online) creating more litter	The concern has been noted by the project team; however it is not evident how the online option would increase litter in the area.
	5	Concern about the route alignment option A (online) creating more noise and other impacts for residents	The management of road traffic noise is a major factor in road planning. Once a preferred route is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project further environmental studies including a noise assessment would be completed.

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Transport response
	3	Concern about the route alignment option B (offline) creating more noise and dust for residents	Once a preferred route is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project specialist environmental studies would be completed including air quality and noise assessments to inform the design and minimise noise and air quality impacts.
	1	Suggestion that SA2BF route alignment option B (offline) would create less air emissions	Once a preferred route is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project an air quality assessment would be conducted to inform the design and minimise air quality impacts.
Safety	2	Concern about safety for community and workers, in relation to PFAS contamination	Some parts of the W2BF are within the PFAS affected area. The project would be managed in accordance with the requirements of the PFAS National Environmental Management Plan. Transport will continue to work with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to manage PFAS affected land.
	13	Comment that route alignment option B (offline) would provide a safer alignment and/or construction environment	Transport acknowledges that route alignment option B (offline) would provide a safer construction environment because it minimises exposure to live traffic and reduces the need for utility relocations. Transport also acknowledges that route alignment option B (offline) would provide a safer environment for road users due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A higher quality road alignment • Reduced property access points to the road.
	2	Comment that route alignment option B (offline) would create an egress in emergency situations	Transport acknowledges that route alignment option B (offline) would provide an alternative access route in emergency situations.
	1	Comment that early morning mist will create a visibility issue for W2SA route alignment option B (offline)	Once a preferred route is selected a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project topography and visibility issues would be assessed.
Amenity	6	Concern about the reduced visual amenity associated with route alignment option B (offline), including the potential for interrupted views of farmland and the Stockton Dunes	Once a preferred route is selected a visual impact assessment would be conducted as part of the environmental assessment to investigate these impacts. Where appropriate, screening such as landscaping would be considered to minimise visual impact.
Traffic	2	Suggestion that a detour via Richardson Road and Medowie Road be used during construction of route alignment option A (online)	A traffic management plan would be developed for the project during construction and would inform traffic routes. The suggestion has been noted by the project team.
	2	Comment that dual carriageway between Nelson Bay and Williamstown would create better traffic flow	The duplication of Nelson Bay Road is being delivered as a program of work. Transport will keep the community informed about future duplication projects as planning progresses.

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Transport response
	7	Comment that route alignment option B (offline) would create better traffic flow	Transport acknowledges that route alignment option B (offline) would provide better traffic flow for road users due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A higher quality road alignment • Reduced property access points to the road.
	12	Comment that route alignment option B (offline) would reduce construction traffic issues	Transport acknowledges that route alignment option B (offline) would provide a safer construction environment and would minimise impact on existing road users.
	5	Comment that route alignment option B (offline) would result in a quicker journey for motorists	Transport acknowledges that route alignment option B (offline) would result in improved travel times for motorists.
	1	Comment that route alignment option B (offline) would be more suitable to heavy vehicles	All proposed route alignment options would be suitable for heavy vehicles. The feedback has been noted by the project team.
	1	Comment that route alignment option A (online) would reduce traffic congestion	All proposed route alignment options aim to reduce congestion. The feedback has been noted by the project team.
Design	3	Suggestion to include a roundabout or flyover in the midway connection proposed for the SA2BF section of the upgrade, or support for the midway connection	An intersection would be provided at Janet Parade.
Construction staging	1	Request to schedule the SA2BF section first for construction	A work program would be developed during the planning phase of the project.
	2	Request to undertake the Lemon Tree Passage Road upgrade concurrently with the W2BF upgrade	Work on the Nelson Bay Road and Lemon Tree Passage Road upgrade is scheduled to start in December 2019 and will provide immediate benefits at the intersection. Every effort will be made to minimise disruption to the community during this essential upgrade.

3.3. Recommendations

The majority of submissions (47) supported the route alignment option A (online) in both sections of the W2BF, whilst a smaller number (28) conveyed support for route alignment option B (offline). These outcomes and the range of issues outlined in Table 2 will be considered when progressing the project. Based on this feedback, Transport will be proceeding with further development of W2BF.

We will work closely with stakeholders and local residents in relation to the potential impacts of W2BF by:

- Informing the community and stakeholders of consultation outcomes and the next steps for the proposal via the distribution of this report
- Ensuring community and stakeholder comments and suggestions are considered when finalising the preferred option

- Continuing to carry out communication activities as the project progresses and informing the community through the Transport website and project notifications.

In addition to the community consultation outcomes, other factors will influence the preferred route decision-making process including cost, time, engineering, safety and environmental matters.

3.4. Next steps

The next milestone for the Nelson Bay Road program of work is the start of work for the Nelson Bay Road and Lemon Tree Passage Road upgrade. This work is due to start in December 2019.

We are working with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to ensure appropriate management of any potential PFAS in the vicinity of Nelson Bay Road during the delivery of the project.

Ongoing community feedback will be considered to finalise the preferred route option for the W2BF and to prepare the environmental assessment. More information will be provided to the community and stakeholders as the project progresses.

Appendix A - Have your say newsletter



Appendix B – Facebook post

 **NSW Roads**
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Email your feedback on proposed route alignment options for Nelson Bay Road by 11 October to nelsonbayroad@rms.nsw.gov.au



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Appendix C – Newspaper advertisement



Roads and Maritime Services

Have your say Nelson Bay Road duplication Williamtown to Bobs Farm route alignment options

Community and stakeholders are invited to comment on the route alignment options for the duplication of Nelson Bay Road from Williamtown to Bobs Farm. Visit rms.work/nelsonbayroad to find out more information and view maps of the route alignment options.

Please send your feedback to our project team at:
nelsonbayroad@rms.nsw.gov.au or:
Nelson Bay Road project team
Roads and Maritime Services
Locked Bay 2030
Newcastle NSW 2300

Comments are invited until **5pm on Friday 11 October 2019** and will be considered in finalising the preferred route option.

This proposal is part of the NSW Government's \$275 million investment to improve safety and travel times on Nelson Bay Road by duplicating the road.

For more information contact the project team on 1800 512 277 (during business hours) or email nelsonbayroad@rms.nsw.gov.au.

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