

Frequently Asked Questions

M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace

October 2015

This information has been developed to provide more detail about the extension of the M1 Pacific Motorway to Raymond Terrace and to provide answers to frequently asked questions from stakeholders and the community.

The NSW Government is providing \$3 million in 2015-16 to continue planning for a future extension of the M1 Pacific Motorway to the Pacific Highway at Raymond Terrace. A revised concept design has been developed, which includes major improvements for connectivity to the surrounding road network and minimises environmental impacts.

Project benefits and features

Why is the M1 Pacific Motorway being extended?

The M1 Pacific Motorway and Pacific Highway are critical links in the National Land Transport Network and among the busiest transport corridors in Australia.

The motorway is being extended to:

- Improve connection between the M1 Pacific Motorway at Black Hill and the Pacific Highway at Raymond Terrace

- Improve traffic flow for motorists and freight for more reliable travel times
- Improve accessibility to the surrounding road network
- Improve safety for all road users
- Provide one of the last major motorway stages of the Pacific Motorway between Sydney and Brisbane.

What will the proposed upgrade involve?

The proposed upgrade involves:

- 15 kilometres of dual carriageway motorway with two lanes in each direction, bypassing Hexham and Heatherbrae
- Interchanges at Black Hill, Tarro, Tomago Road and north of Heatherbrae
- A 2.6 kilometre bridge over Woodlands Close, the Main Northern Railway, New England Highway and Hunter River

- Minimum flood immunity along the new roadway between Black Hill and Tomago for a one in 100 year flood event
- Minimum flood immunity along the new roadway between Tomago and Raymond Terrace for a one in 20 year flood event.

What is the status and cost of the proposed upgrade?

The NSW Government is providing \$3 million in 2015-16 to progress planning for the project.

The NSW Government has committed \$200 million under Rebuilding NSW to get the project ready for construction.

The timing for construction is not confirmed and is dependent on planning approval, future traffic needs and funding availability.

The M1 Pacific Motorway is part of the National Land Transport Network and funding for planning, improvements and upgrading is led by the Australian Government.

Planning activities carried out by Roads and Maritime would form the basis of a submission to the Australian Government for construction funding.

Design review

What planning has happened so far?

Planning for the M1 Pacific Motorway extension to the Pacific Highway at Raymond Terrace began in October 2004 and has involved an extensive community consultation program to identify a preferred route and develop a concept design.

A design was displayed for community comment in 2008 with feedback considered to develop a refined design which was announced in 2010. The route was reserved in the Newcastle and Port Stephens Local Environmental Plans.

Roads and Maritime has since reviewed and changed the 2010 design to ensure the proposal provides the best outcome for road users, the environment and the community.

Details of the technical and environmental investigations carried out as part of the design review can be found in the 2015 discussion paper, available to download from rms.nsw.gov.au/m1rt.

Why has the route been changed?

Since the 2010 design was completed, Roads and Maritime has gained considerable knowledge and experience in building large structures across floodplains through projects such as the Pacific Highway bypass of Kempsey.

In early 2015, Roads and Maritime updated the project objectives and reviewed the 2010 design. This review was carried out to ensure the extension provides the best and safest outcome for road users, the environment and the community.

Roads and Maritime reviewed the 2010 design and route with an aim to:

- Improve functionality and performance of the road, and the traffic flow around interchanges, particularly at Black Hill, the New England Highway and Tomago
- Benefit from the lessons learnt during other Pacific Highway projects in similar floodplain environments
- Minimise environmental impacts of the road alignment
- Address the changing needs of the adjoining road network, in particular following the opening of the Hunter Expressway in 2014.

What has changed since the 2010 design?

The changes include:

- Moving the road alignment further north of the 2010 design and including a bridge structure across the Hunter River floodplain. This would minimise and further avoid environmental impacts to protected wetlands next to the Hunter River and the floodplain.
- Changes to the Black Hill interchange and providing a new interchange at Tarro to improve traffic flow and connectivity

- between the M1 Pacific Motorway, New England Highway and John Renshaw Drive
- Changes to the Tomago Road interchange design to improve accessibility to and from Tomago Road, which includes a new link road behind Tomago industrial area connecting to Old Punt Road and Tomago Road.

Assessing and managing potential environmental impacts

How will the project's environmental impacts be assessed?

An Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared to assess the potential environmental and social impacts of the proposal and to identify management and mitigation measures.

The investigations will consider:

- Biodiversity and environmentally sensitive areas
- Hydrology and flooding
- Property including acquisition and changes to land use
- Aboriginal and European heritage
- Traffic impacts
- Operational and construction noise
- Socio economic impacts.

The Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be completed and displayed for community and stakeholder comment in early 2017.

How are impacts to native flora and fauna being addressed?

The project would require clearing of native vegetation and disturbance of some waterways and wetlands. This could impact important habitat for threatened and non-threatened plant and animal species.

The Environmental Impact Statement will consider the project's impact on the ecology within the project area and identify mitigation and management measures.

How are Aboriginal heritage impacts being addressed?

Preliminary archaeological investigations have been carried out within the project area in recent years and provide valuable information to assess the impact of the upgrade on Aboriginal cultural heritage.

An Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment report will be prepared as part of the Environmental Impact Statement.

Roads and Maritime will continue to consult with the local Aboriginal community, including the Mindaribba and Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

Roads and Maritime protects Aboriginal heritage and manages impacts that may arise from its projects in accordance with the Roads and Maritime Services Procedure for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation and Investigation (PACHCI). This sets out a four step due diligence and consultation process that is applied to all projects, regardless of scale or size.

General information about how Roads and Maritime manages Aboriginal heritage during infrastructure developments is available at rms.nsw.gov.au.

Will the motorway be affected by flooding?

The project crosses the Hunter River floodplain so flood risk was a key consideration in the design review. The proposed design will offer minimum flood immunity to the edge of each carriageway for a one in 100 year flood event between Black Hill and Tomago, and for a one in 20 year flood event between Tomago and Raymond Terrace.

The 2.6 kilometre bridge across the floodplain would have flood immunity for a one in 100 year flood event.

A hydrology and flooding assessment will be prepared as part of the Environmental Impact Statement. This will identify the potential flooding impacts and mitigation measures to minimise flooding on surrounding areas.

Will the motorway make flooding worse in surrounding areas?

Construction work on the floodplain may cause temporary changes in drainage patterns which could impact the characteristics of a flood. Once the motorway is built, structures such as bridges, viaducts and culverts could cause changes in flow.

A hydrology and flooding assessment will be prepared as part of the Environmental Impact Statement. This will identify the potential flooding impacts and mitigation measures to minimise flooding on surrounding areas.

Will the motorway create a lot of noise?

Roads and Maritime will carry out noise studies for the Environmental Impact Statement. The noise studies will consider existing noise levels and predicted noise levels taking into consideration predicted traffic volumes and road type.

Mitigation measures will be dependent on Roads and Maritime noise guidelines at the time of construction.

Property acquisition and access

Will any property acquisitions be required for the proposed upgrade?

Roads and Maritime will work with potentially affected property owners throughout the planning process.

Properties directly impacted by the project would need to be either partially or totally acquired. This generally occurs following project approval.

Will Roads and Maritime need to enter my property?

Roads and Maritime may need to enter private property to carry out field investigations to assist in

the development of road projects. You will be contacted by Roads and Maritime if access to your property is required. A fact sheet answering some commonly asked questions about property access is available at rms.nsw.gov.au.

Community engagement

How have stakeholders and the community been involved so far?

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.

Roads and Maritime will continue to work with the community and stakeholders during the planning process to understand issues and minimise potential impacts.

How can I provide comments?

All previous feedback is being considered along with any new feedback to finalise the concept design, understand issues and minimise potential impacts of the proposal.

Please send us your comments by:

- **Email:** M1RT@jacobs.com
- **Phone:** 1800 094 895 (during business hours)
- **Mail:** M1 to Raymond Terrace Project Manager, Roads and Maritime Services, Locked Bag 2030, Newcastle NSW 2300.

You are invited to provide feedback until **6 November 2015**.

How will my comments be used?

Following the revised concept design display, Roads and Maritime will consider all comments received for the project. Community and stakeholder feedback will be used to finalise the concept design and inform the Environmental Impact Statement.

How will the community be notified of project progress?

Stakeholders and the community will be kept informed of progress through regular project updates and the project website.

The website, phone, email and mail contact points are available for project information as part of ongoing community engagement.

Roads and Maritime will continue to meet regularly with key stakeholders and potentially affected property owners as the project progresses.

What happens next?

Upcoming planning activities include:

- Community and stakeholder discussions
- Finalise the concept design
- Prepare the Environmental Impact Statement for display in early 2017.

The timing of construction is not confirmed and is dependent on planning approval, future traffic needs and funding availability.

More information

For more information about the project please contact the project team by:

- **Email:** M1RT@jacobs.com
- **Phone:** 1800 094 895 (during business hours)
- **Mail:** M1 to Raymond Terrace Project Manager
Roads and Maritime Services
Locked Bag 2030
Newcastle NSW 2300

Information is also available on the Roads and Maritime website rms.nsw.gov.au/m1rt.

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