



# Fingal Bay Link Road Community Consultation

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Transport for NSW

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Suite 1, Level 1  
165 Lambton Road  
Broadmeadow, NSW 2292

Phone: 02 9466 4665

[www.hunterbusinesschamber.com.au](http://www.hunterbusinesschamber.com.au)

## Introduction

The Hunter Business Chamber appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Fingal Bay Link Road and comment on the current project brief.

The Hunter Business Chamber (the Chamber) is the largest regional business chamber in Australia. We independently represent more than 2,500 member organisations across the Hunter region, including in the Port Stephens area, to all levels of government. The Chamber is the peak business and industry association in the Hunter, reflecting the interests of the region's diverse business sector.

## Comments

The Chamber would like to take this opportunity to provide general feedback on the priority status of the Bay Link Road project, based on the feedback we have received from member organisations in and around the Tomaree area. It is our view that the project has not been the subject of strong advocacy from either local or regional businesses or the broader community. We do not believe there is consensus among the range of stakeholder groups in the area as to the urgency of the project and whether it is a high priority at this time.

We acknowledge it has historically been on the agenda of Port Stephens Council and some interest groups, and their advocacy led to the election commitment. However, the \$188 million project value and commitment is a substantial amount of money which we assert could be better directed to higher priority projects in the local government area of Port Stephens.

We see better potential in focusing on improvements to the road network linking to and around Newcastle Airport, as well as links to the M1 and south to Newcastle where other road projects and plans are active. For example, we believe a better use of the funding at this time would be to extend the planned duplication of Nelson Bay Road to include the strategically important section between Stockton and Williamtown and section improvements around Salt Ash. These roadworks would generate a more significant benefit cost to the local area and the region than the Fingal Bay Link Road.

These works would also support the development of the Williamtown Special Activation Precinct (SAP), which has broad support from regional stakeholders across business, industry and the community. It is anticipated that the SAP will generate collaborative action across government to realise the ambition to make the airport precinct a significant economic driver for the region for decades to come.

The Chamber is a strong advocate of ensuring all levels of government commit to funding infrastructure of strategic, community and economic importance. We appreciate that funding between projects is not necessarily transferrable, but also recognise that a sizeable commitment to one project in a particular area can adversely affect the funding priority of

other projects in that area. In an ideal world, all projects would be funded, but to ensure maximum benefit for the community and regional economy, we believe further improvements to Nelson Bay Road and link roads to the airport and SAP precinct should be given funding priority over Fingal Bay Link Road.

### **Recommendations**

We respectfully request that Transport for NSW take the following actions in relation to the project:

1. Defer actions to deliver the project beyond this current phase and consider and confirm re-directing the funding to more urgent and higher priority projects elsewhere in the LGA;
2. Identify the benefit cost ratio of the project and compare this to other current and foreshadowed local projects within the auspice of Transport for NSW to identify where these funds would be better spent.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment and welcome further engagement on this submission.

### **Contacts**

Bob Hawes  
CEO  
02 4969 9600  
[Bob.hawes@nswbc.com.au](mailto:Bob.hawes@nswbc.com.au)

Amy De Lore  
Policy & Public Affairs Manager  
02 4969 9600  
[amy.delore@nswbc.com.au](mailto:amy.delore@nswbc.com.au)