

25 August 2021

Director – Transport Assessments
Planning & Assessment, Department of Planning Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124
Online submission via <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects>

RE: Submission on the M1 Pacific Motorway Extension to Raymond Terrace Environmental Impact Statement (M1RT EIS)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the M1 Pacific Motorway Extension (M1RT) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). On 19 July 2021, Port Stephens Council (Council) staff were briefed by Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) on this project which has a direct impact on areas of Port Stephens.

Council supports the significant benefits the project will deliver to the road network and connections between Port Stephens and the Hunter. This submission identifies some opportunities for TfNSW to mitigate impacts on areas in Port Stephens most likely to be negatively impacted by the changes, such as Heatherbrae and Raymond Terrace.

Biodiversity

It is acknowledged that the Biodiversity Assessment Report (BAR) and EIS consider the impact of potential Koala habitat loss to be low, and that the Port Stephens Comprehensive Plan of Management (CKPoM) does not apply to the project. Notwithstanding, it is recommended that the project considers undertaking preferred Koala feed tree replacement planting to offset the removal of preferred Koala feed trees or prioritising securing biodiversity offsets for Koalas within the Port Stephens local government area to ensure no net loss to local Koala habitat in Port Stephens.

The BAR may have incorrectly identified the endangered ecological community (EEC) at the south east corner of the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Old Punt Road. This patch of EEC was previously identified as River-flat Eucalypt Forest and may be of importance, as it may be the only representation of this EEC in this locality. Impacts to this EEC should be avoided or minimised.

The BAR relies on the previously approved industrial subdivision at Heatherbrae (Kinross Estate) for its assessment of impacts on *Diuris arenaria*, and subsequent exclusion from offsetting. Impacts to *Diuris arenaria* were not assessed as part of the subdivision approval. As such, all impacts to *Diuris arenaria* individuals and habitat within the construction footprint must be assessed and offset in the project's BAR.

It is requested that the exclusion of Eastern Grass Owl (*Tyto longimembris*) be revised as an ecosystem credit species. The species has known habitat associations with PCTs identified within the project footprint and has been recently recorded in Tomago.

Economic impacts

The EIS takes into consideration the socio-economic impacts on Heatherbrae as part of this project, and it is noted that a new northbound exit ramp at Heatherbrae was added after community concern about the lack of direct access and the effect of this on local businesses.

Whilst this will provide some level of support to existing businesses, there is an opportunity for TfNSW to assist further by providing public open space and facilities in Heatherbrae (which is currently lacking), and signage to clearly identify Raymond Terrace and Heatherbrae as a service centre.

Heatherbrae and Raymond Terrace contain established businesses that cater for the service needs of motorists using the main road network, such as take away food, vehicle servicing, fuel stations and overnight accommodation. Impacts on these businesses should be considered and mitigated by ensuring adequate signage and facilities are provided to attract motorists to continue to use these service centres.

Roads and assets

The EIS identifies that Old Punt Road and Masonite Road, two existing local roads, will be realigned and will become major access points to the highway. This provides the opportunity for these roads to become classified State roads, and Council encourages TfNSW to consider this outcome. If these roads become classified as State roads, the funds currently collected under the Port Stephens Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan dedicated to the upkeep of these roads would be reallocated to a number of vital local projects, for example public domain or other works to assist Heatherbrae and Raymond Terrace during this economic transition.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on these issues. If you wish to discuss the matters raised above or have any questions, please contact Mia Gallaway, Strategic Planner by email at mia.gallaway@portstephens.nsw.gov.au or by phone on 4988 0578.

Yours faithfully,



Steven Peart
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Port Stephens Council