

Transport  
for NSW

# Maritime Infrastructure Discussion Paper

February 2026

Consultation Report



[transport.nsw.gov.au](https://transport.nsw.gov.au)

OFFICIAL

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Consultation Process .....	4
Key findings and stakeholder feedback .....	4
Key Investment Locations .....	4
Maritime infrastructure prioritisation and delivery .....	4
Safe and sustainable access.....	4
Technology and data .....	4
Maritime infrastructure planning and property.....	5
Responding to dredging needs.....	5
Summary of other feedback .....	5
Initial analysis of feedback.....	5
Next steps.....	5
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Background to the Maritime Infrastructure Plan .....	5
<b>Consultation process</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Purpose of the consultation.....	6
Overview of engagement activities.....	7
Promotion and communication channels .....	7
Stakeholder groups consulted .....	7
<b>Summary of feedback</b> .....	<b>8</b>
General feedback .....	8
Key themes identified under each focus area .....	10
Key Investment Locations .....	10
Maritime infrastructure prioritisation and delivery .....	11
Safe and sustainable access.....	12
Technology and data .....	13

Maritime infrastructure planning and property .....	13
Responding to dredging needs .....	14
Summary of other feedback .....	15
<b>Initial analysis of feedback .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Key Investment Locations .....	16
Maritime infrastructure prioritisation and delivery .....	16
Safe and sustainable access .....	17
Technology and data .....	17
Maritime infrastructure planning and property .....	18
Responding to dredging needs .....	18
Summary of other feedback .....	18
<b>Next steps .....</b>	<b>19</b>

# Executive Summary

The *Maritime Infrastructure Discussion Paper – Consultation Report* presents the outcomes of a comprehensive consultation process led by Transport for NSW to inform the future direction of maritime infrastructure planning and investment across NSW. The consultation sought feedback from a broad range of stakeholders, including recreational and commercial boaters, industry representatives, councils, and government agencies, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Maritime Infrastructure Plan (MIP) and identify priorities for future action.

## Consultation Process

Consultation was conducted from August to October 2025, using the "Have Your Say" platform and a multi-channel communications strategy. Engagement activities included social media posts, direct email campaigns, media releases, and stakeholder toolkits.

## Key findings and stakeholder feedback

Stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on key focus areas and to share their broader views on priorities and needs by completing a survey or providing a written submission. The following section summarises the general sentiment for each of these focus areas.

### Key Investment Locations

Stakeholders generally support the use of Key Investment Locations (KILs) to guide maritime infrastructure investment, but they emphasise the need for a more flexible and responsive approach. Feedback calls for KILs to adapt more regularly to changing community needs, population growth, and emerging high-demand areas. There is also a strong desire for local user groups to have a greater role in informing investment priorities.

### Maritime infrastructure prioritisation and delivery

There is a preference for maintaining and upgrading existing maritime infrastructure over building new assets, with stakeholders also highlighting the importance of aligning projects with broader government strategies and clarifying what types of assets and amenities are funded by Transport. Incorporating local insights into prioritisation is highly valued, alongside ensuring infrastructure delivery is responsive to the unique needs of mooring licensees, permanent residents, and diverse boating communities.

### Safe and sustainable access

Ensuring safe, accessible, and environmentally responsible maritime infrastructure is identified as a top priority for many respondents. This includes ongoing investment in programs like the Boating Infrastructure and Dredging Scheme, improving access for people with disabilities and older boaters, and maintaining state-owned coastal infrastructure. There is also a strong emphasis on providing sewage pump-outs, using sustainable materials, integrating climate risk assessments, and protecting maritime heritage values in planning and renewal processes.

### Technology and data

Stakeholders advocate for the use of technology and data to inform investment decisions and improve user experience. There is strong support for consolidating information into a single, user-friendly digital platform. Improved data collection on waterway use and infrastructure utilisation is seen as key to more responsive and targeted planning.

### **Maritime infrastructure planning and property**

Feedback consistently calls for streamlined, transparent planning and leasing arrangements to support business confidence and private sector investment. Stakeholders highlight the need for improved coordination between agencies, less red tape, and better management of competition for limited foreshore land, especially in high-demand areas such as Sydney Harbour. There are also opportunities to enhance public access to amenities through reinvigorating initiatives such as the Sydney Harbour Boating Destinations program.

### **Responding to dredging needs**

There is broad and strong support for establishing consistent, long-term funding for frequent and strategic dredging programs. Stakeholders emphasise the importance of improved coordination between government, councils, and operators, streamlined environmental approvals, and greater transparency in how dredging locations are prioritised.

### **Summary of other feedback**

Additional feedback highlights the need for better performance metrics, more transparent reporting on project outcomes, and improved community engagement. Stakeholders call for a consistent statewide approach to identifying and delivering boating infrastructure priorities, improved governance across agencies, seek ongoing opportunities for boaters to provide feedback and input into future decisions.

### **Initial analysis of feedback**

The initial analysis of consultation feedback reveals several consistent themes and new ideas for improving maritime infrastructure planning and delivery. These insights will inform the development of the future maritime infrastructure agenda, ensuring it is responsive to the evolving needs of communities, industry, and government.

## **Next steps**

Transport for NSW will use the insights from this consultation, along with previous feedback, to develop a draft future maritime infrastructure agenda. This will involve further targeted consultation with key stakeholders in early 2026 and a draft maritime infrastructure agenda is expected to be released by September 2026.

# **Introduction**

## **Background to the Maritime Infrastructure Plan**

The Maritime Infrastructure Plan 2019–2024 (MIP) was released in December 2018 and sets the strategic direction for planning, prioritising, and delivering maritime infrastructure across NSW. Developed through stakeholder feedback and analysis of population, economic, commercial, and recreational drivers influencing demand for maritime infrastructure, the Plan provided a framework to guide investment decisions and respond to the growing demand for safe and accessible maritime facilities.

The MIP aimed to:

- Increase coordination and collaboration across government and industry.

- Reduce administrative burden for councils and stakeholders.
- Inform the broader community about how investment decisions are made.
- Identify priority needs at 14 Key Investment Locations (KILs) based on waterway user activity, existing infrastructure, and economic performance.

Through this framework, the Plan has supported the delivery and/or upgrade of 177 boat ramps, 90 wharves, 7 pump-outs and fuel facilities and 14 vessel storage facilities. Its focus has included creating jobs in regional NSW, improving access for boaters of all abilities, and enhancing foreshore amenities.

It prioritised safe, inclusive, and sustainable access to NSW waterways, aligning with broader government commitments under the Maritime Safety Plan 2026 and the Marine Estate Management Strategy 2028.

The Plan was developed for all users of the NSW waterways, including recreational boaters, commercial vessel operators such as fishing and tourism businesses, the broader maritime industry, local councils and other government agencies, each of whom relies on safe, reliable and well-connected maritime infrastructure.

Transport for NSW oversees the implementation of the MIP, delivering and maintaining public maritime infrastructure across the state, including regional harbour improvements and dredging works. Funding is provided through the Waterways Fund, which is funded by boating licence and registration fees in addition to other revenue sources as outlined in the Ports and Maritime Administration Act.

The scope of the MIP excludes infrastructure supporting import/export trades, the cruise ship industry in major ports, and commuter ferry infrastructure in Sydney Harbour and the Port of Newcastle.

## Consultation process

To ensure a future maritime infrastructure agenda reflects community needs and delivers meaningful, lasting benefits to all boaters and stakeholders across NSW, consultation was sought on the Maritime Infrastructure Discussion Paper. This marked a key milestone in Transport for NSW's commitment to collaborative planning and investment in maritime infrastructure.

### Purpose of the consultation

Transport for NSW conducted consultation on the future of maritime infrastructure from August to October 2025, using the Maritime Infrastructure Discussion Paper and the Have Your Say online platform.

Consultation was undertaken to inform the future maritime infrastructure agenda for NSW by seeking feedback from communities, industry, and stakeholders on the Maritime Infrastructure Discussion Paper. It outlines progress made under the Maritime Infrastructure Plan 2019–2024 (MIP), assesses the effectiveness of the current strategic framework, and identifies focus areas for future investment and improvement.

Feedback was invited from anyone who uses or relies on NSW waterways, including recreational and commercial boaters, representatives of the maritime industry, councils and other NSW Government agencies, 321 total contributions were made. The consultation provided an opportunity for stakeholders to respond to specific questions on key focus areas, as well as to offer general

feedback on priorities and needs. Submissions were accepted via the Have Your Say website, ensuring a transparent and accessible process for all interested parties.

## Overview of engagement activities

The engagement strategy focused on building awareness, encouraging participation, and enabling meaningful contributions from stakeholders.

Key engagement activities included:

- Digital promotion via boosted Facebook posts on the Maritime NSW channel, reaching over 81,000 people and generating 211,134 impressions.
- Direct email campaigns to a database of over 693 stakeholders, with open rates between 44%–50%.
- Promotion through the Transport for NSW website and a dedicated consultation landing page.
- Media release published on 18 August 2025, picked up by industry and community outlets.
- Distribution of Stakeholder Toolkits to associations and peak bodies, enabling them to promote the consultation within their networks.
- Use of the Have Your Say platform for surveys, quick polls, formal submissions, and document downloads.

Engagement was measured by reach, conversion of interest into action, and the quality of responses received. The campaign achieved a strong 66% conversion rate from unique visitors to contributions, with 321 total contributions including 182 survey completions, 29 formal submissions, and 110 quick poll responses.

## Promotion and communication channels

A multi-channel communications approach was used to maximise awareness and participation:

- **Facebook:** The primary channel for broad awareness, with paid boosts and organic sharing extending reach into boating networks.
- **Direct Email:** Targeted campaigns to known stakeholders, including reminders and tailored messages for industry and government contacts.
- **Transport for NSW website:** Central hosting of consultation information and links to the Have Your Say platform.
- **Media release:** Official announcement published on the Transport website and picked up by industry media.
- **Stakeholder Toolkit:** Provided draft content for associations and peak bodies to share with their members.
- **Other channels:** LinkedIn (via staff personal accounts), Microsoft Teams shares, and industry media (e.g. Marine Business News).

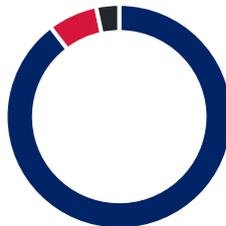
## Stakeholder groups consulted

The consultation targeted a broad range of stakeholder groups, including:

- Recreational boaters (making up over 90% of identified contributors)

- Industry and peak bodies (7.1% of contributors)
- Government and council representatives (3.3% of contributors)

## Stakeholder groups consulted



- Recreational boaters
- Industry and peak bodies
- Government and council representatives

While engagement from the boating community was high, participation from industry and government stakeholders was more modest. Targeted email outreach to peak bodies and councils was used to encourage greater input from these groups, and toolkit distribution helped extend reach into networks where Transport's direct influence is limited.

## Summary of feedback

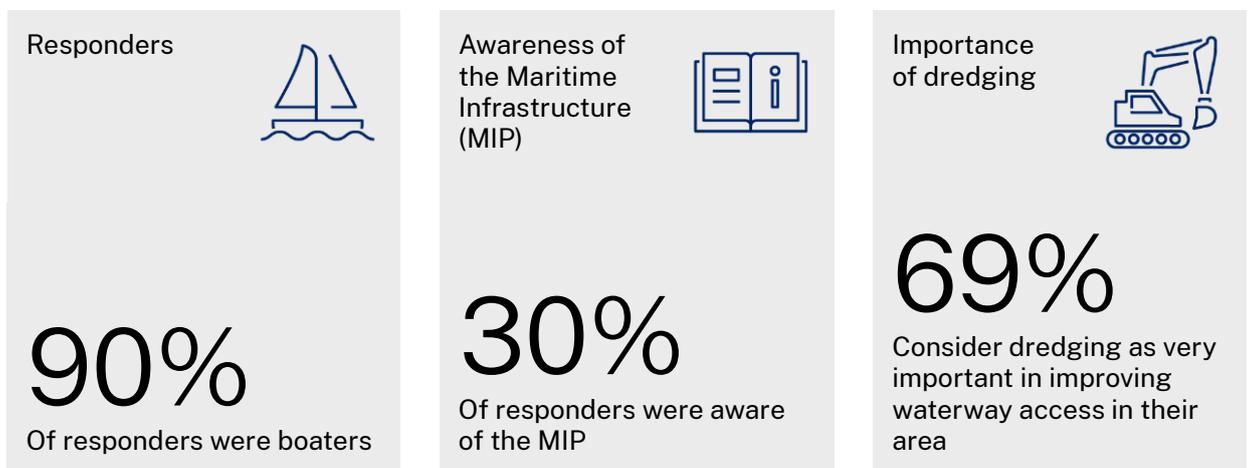
Stakeholders shared their views on the key focus areas, along with their broader priorities and needs, by completing the survey or providing a written submission. This chapter highlights the key themes and insights that emerged from the consultation.

### General feedback

A summary of key findings from the survey responses is provided below:

- Just over 30% of respondents were aware of the MIP.
- 90% of respondents to the survey were boaters, 7% were from industry/peak body and 3% were from government agencies/councils
- 63% of respondents indicated they had not noticed an improvement to boating infrastructure in their area since 2019 when the MIP commenced.
- 50% indicated they did not believe the MIP has helped direct investment to where it's needed most and 34% were unsure.
- The MIP outcomes which received the greatest support were:
  - Enable great recreational and tourism experiences on our waterways (64%)
  - Facilitate the improvement and activation of our harbours and foreshore precincts and improve public amenity for the community (60%)

- Enable safe and environmentally sustainable access, use and navigation of NSW waterways (58%)
- The existing 4 MIP objectives received strong support:
  - Effectively manage and maintain important maritime infrastructure assets owned and managed by the state on a whole-of-life basis (76%)
  - Adopt a strategic approach to investment in maritime infrastructure, identifying clear priorities to maximise benefits for users, communities and the economy (72%)
  - Support local government, the private sector and other organisations to improve and maintain maritime infrastructure where this supports priority needs (73%)
  - Improve coordination of the funding, planning and delivery of maritime infrastructure between state agencies, local government and industry (70%)



- While there was general support for the MIP objectives and outcomes, opportunities were also identified to broaden outcomes to reflect rapid changes in the maritime sector, including electrification and climate resilience and a desire for more inclusive objectives, especially for older and disabled boaters.
- Few respondents (8%) considered that MIP helped inform private sector investment in maritime infrastructure.
- When it came to private investment in maritime infrastructure, industry respondents highlighted lengthy planning approval processes (82%) and the need for multiple agency and council approvals (73%) as the greatest barriers.
- For council or government agency respondents, requiring approvals from multiple government agencies and councils (100%), lack of clear guidance on environmental assessments and approvals (83%) and lengthy planning approval processes (83%) were ranked as the greatest challenges for council or government led infrastructure delivery.
- There was strong support for dredging with the 69% of respondents considering dredging as very important in improving waterway access in their area.
- Respondents considered establishing a funded long term dredging program (75%), streamline environmental approval processes for dredging activities (66%) and improving coordination between NSW Government agencies, local councils and dredging operators (58%) as the most effective ways to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of dredging operations in NSW.

- When determining how dredging priorities should best support commercial and recreational waterway users, respondents ranked safety risks to navigation and vessel access (75%) and frequency and severity of sediment build up and waterway obstruction (58%) as the most important.
- When considering what criteria should determine future dredging priorities respondents strongly supported waterway usage data and economic importance of waterways, safety risks to navigation and vessel access and frequency and severity of sediment build up and waterway obstruction.

## Key themes identified under each focus area

During the consultation process, Transport identified 6 focus areas for further consideration as part of the future maritime infrastructure agenda.

### Key Investment Locations

Respondents generally supported the use of Key Investment Locations (KILs) to target maritime infrastructure investment where it delivers the greatest benefit. However, feedback highlighted the need for a more inclusive and transparent approach to ensure other high-demand and emerging areas are prioritised for investment – including Sydney Harbour, Tuggerah Lakes and Brookly/Lower Hawkesbury (the latter of which is already a KIL). There were also calls for greater recognition of regional and inland waterways, and suggestions that KILs should explicitly consider non-powered craft participation in recognition of the growing popularity of sports such as rowing.

Feedback suggested investment priorities should be more flexible and responsive to changing needs informed by up-to-date data such as population growth, local government priorities and demand, thereby ensuring greater responsiveness to evolving community, industry, and environmental needs. Some respondents emphasised the importance of engaging with local user groups or establishing dedicated user groups within each KIL to help inform investment priorities and decisions. The Maritime Advisory Council (MAC) was also identified to have a critical role in determining priority locations.



Caption: Map of Key Investment Locations and other significant NSW waterways

### **Snapshot of insights from survey response:**

- 46% of respondents agree with the current approach to identify KILs to inform prioritisation of maritime infrastructure across NSW – 38% being neutral and 15% disagreeing.
- Most respondents are familiar with the listed KILs, with the highest recognition for Botany Bay, Georges River and Port Hacking, Lower Hawkesbury River, Pittwater and Brisbane Water, and Lake Macquarie.
- Botany Bay/Georges River, the Lower Shoalhaven River and Port Stephens were identified as KIL locations that required priority investment, however there is broad support for investment throughout the state.
- There is general support for prioritising investment in these locations, but a significant proportion of respondents are neutral or disagree with some locations, indicating that not all KILs are universally viewed as priorities.
- Respondents considered the following as key factors to be considered when prioritising locations for investment: existing maritime infrastructure, economic activity that would benefit from investment and local economic benefits. The level of waterway activity was also seen as important.

### **Maritime infrastructure prioritisation and delivery**

Long-term planning and coordinated delivery are seen as essential for meeting the needs of a growing and diverse boating community, with a preference for multi-year funding instead of one-off grants. Stakeholders consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining and upgrading existing infrastructure, such as boat ramps, wharves, and supporting amenities, rather than focusing on new assets.

Audits and inspections from Transport staff, complimented by direct engagement with users at boat ramps, were suggested to inform repair and upgrade priorities. Improved coordination across government agencies and alignment with local plans were seen as essential for efficient and timely delivery. The feedback also highlighted the need for ongoing consultation with local users and stakeholders, including periodic surveys and targeted engagement, to ensure that infrastructure meets local community needs and aligns with local plans such as Coastal Management Plans.

There were requests for more inclusive and accessible infrastructure for all community members and a desire for improved amenities, such as public toilets, showers, lighting, fish cleaning tables, and picnic areas near maritime assets. Insufficient trailer parking at boat ramps and poor parking management were frequently cited as barriers to access, with requests for better enforcement and expanded facilities at the most popular locations. Some feedback supported additional focus on vessel storage, including on and off water and courtesy moorings as important infrastructure outcomes.

Mooring licensees identified the need for more infrastructure and amenities that supports their needs such as courtesy moorings, dinghy storage and purpose-built ramps, vessel maintenance facilities, pump-outs and fresh water at wharves. Permanent residents that rely on boating as an essential means of Transport highlighted the need for dedicated infrastructure that prioritises their needs.

Multiple responses highlighted the need for funding, management, and preservation of heritage maritime assets, recognising their safety, community, and tourism value.

Support was expressed for the strengthening of governance processes for approving infrastructure, including seeking advice/recommendations from the MAC and other advisory bodies to ensure benefits to primary customers are prioritised.

Respondents recognised the value of contestable grants, but emphasised the need for a strategic, long-term Government approach to maritime infrastructure investment.

Feedback also indicated support for more up-to-date policies, improved information sharing and a stronger focus on project delivery rather than more documents.

**Snapshot of insights from survey responses:**

Opportunities to improve the delivery of maritime infrastructure for both private and government led projects include:

- Streamlining planning approval processes
- Establishing clear guidelines for planning and environment approvals
- Enhancing coordination between government agencies and local councils
- Reducing the need for multiple approvals requirements.

**Safe and sustainable access**

Ensuring safe and sustainable access is a top priority for many respondents, with strong support for regular maintenance, protection of the environment and equitable access for all users.

There was a strong emphasis on more regular dredging activities to ensure safe navigation and to protect access to waterways. The beneficial reuse of dredged material for beach nourishment was also identified as an opportunity to improve broader community and environmental outcomes.

There were specific requests for improved infrastructure and access for people with disabilities, noting that current facilities are often inadequate. Multiple councils report foreshore and breakwater assets in poor condition and in risk of failure.

Feedback indicated a gap in Sydney Harbour for places where boaters can carry out their own vessel maintenance (e.g., anti-fouling, emergency repairs to ensure safety) to ensure they remain compliant with insurance and boating regulations. In response to this issue, it was suggested that a co-operative slipway/hardstand or floating dry dock be established and/or a pilot be introduced of dedicated vessel cleaning berths to enable moored vessels to dock temporarily.

There were also calls for more pump-out facilities and for the use of sustainable materials in boating infrastructure that minimise impacts on the environment. Respondents highlighted concerns about oil/diesel spills, lack of rapid response equipment at harbours, and the need for pollution prevention and clean-up infrastructure.

Feedback highlighted the importance of incorporating climate change considerations into planning, including undertaking climate risk assessments and improving the resilience of boating infrastructure. Protecting sensitive areas, such as oyster aquaculture zones and seagrass beds, was seen as important, with recommendations to design and locate infrastructure in ways that minimise environmental risks, particularly in these locations.

Respondents also noted opportunities to strengthen the representation of the natural environment in planning and implementation processes. Strengthening environmental impact assessments and supporting assessors with clear authority were seen as ways to ensure that environmental protection remains integral to decision making.

While not within the scope of the Discussion Paper as these issues are dealt with under the Mooring Action Plan, a number of respondents supported the increased use of environmentally friendly moorings and better management of end-of-life vessels.

### **Snapshot of insights from survey responses:**

- Upgraded and well-maintained boat ramps/launch facilities, floating pontoons, navigation aids, and dredging for navigation are consistently ranked as most important for safety and environmental outcomes.
- Infrastructure that supports access for disabled and older boaters is also highlighted, though it ranks lower than core boating infrastructure.
- There is support for upgrades that improve environmental outcomes (e.g., mesh surfaces for light penetration, environmentally friendly moorings), but these are generally ranked below core boating infrastructure needs.

### **Technology and data**

There was strong support for the use of technology and improved data to both inform investment decisions and to improve user experience by sharing valuable information with boaters and the industry in a single platform. Respondents generally see digital innovation as key to smarter, more responsive infrastructure management.

Respondents highlighted the value of technology and data integration to improve evidence-based investment decisions. Integration of various data sources such as long-term trends, GIS mapping, real-time monitoring of waterway and asset use from live camera feeds and other technologies, annual surveys, infrastructure audits and enhanced stakeholder consultation were identified as opportunities to improve evidence-based decisions.

Noting the existing available data sources which are of interest to boaters, boating clubs and the boating industry, in addition to potential new sources of data referred to above, there is general support for sharing such information in a single easy to use on-line platform or app. The desire for a single spatial data portal and greater sharing of data between agencies was frequently mentioned.

There is support for using real-time, contextual boating data to inform investment, monitor usage, and improve safety, rather than relying solely on infrequent surveys or static lists. There were also suggestions for smart infrastructure (e.g., solar lighting, automated sensors) to enhance safety, sustainability, and asset management and calls for expanded data collection to include non-powered craft and event activity (e.g., rowing).

General interest was expressed in how the Government can support emerging vessel technologies, including alternate fuels and propulsion systems and electric and autonomous vessels, and in the installation of cameras, sensors, and Bluetooth beacons to monitor infrastructure usage and condition.

### **Snapshot of insights from survey responses:**

- Improved digital platforms (apps/websites) with real-time information are seen as the most impactful technology improvement for safety, access, and planning.
- Real-time displays at key locations, installation of sensors/cameras, and drones for infrastructure monitoring are also valued, but electric vessel charging is a lower priority for most respondents.

### **Maritime infrastructure planning and property**

Feedback emphasised the need for streamlined transparent planning and leasing arrangements to support business confidence and private sector investment. Long-term leases and clear rules were seen as essential for encouraging investment, and there were calls for incentives and support for private sector involvement in delivering essential maritime infrastructure. An option was presented

to establish a cross agency working group to support a consistent approach to maritime property management based on sustainable rents, secure tenure, and incentives for private investment in public infrastructure.

Frustration was expressed regarding lengthy approval processes and regulatory barriers, with a desire for improved coordination between government agencies and councils. There was also frustration with red tape, bureaucracy, and lack of action on long-standing issues.

Protecting and supporting essential maritime service yards, vessel dry stack storage facilities, and working harbour infrastructure was highlighted as important for meeting demand, maintaining skills and supporting maritime businesses.

The need for consolidation of planning documents and clear governance structures was also raised, with calls for active sponsorship and participation at executive levels within Transport for NSW.

Stakeholder feedback on the Sydney Harbour Boating Destinations initiative was generally supportive but highlighted several areas for improvement. The initiative, which provides public access to amenities at Sydney Harbour marinas in exchange for discounted rents, was seen as a valuable concept with untapped potential. Stakeholders noted that awareness of the program is low and is therefore underutilised by boaters. Suggestions included integrating the initiative into popular boating apps and platforms to improve visibility and engagement.

**Snapshot of insights from survey responses:**

- The main barriers to private investment are lengthy and unclear planning processes, poor coordination, and multiple approval requirements.
- Streamlining approvals, improving guidance, and better coordination are seen as key opportunities to boost business confidence and support investment.

**Responding to dredging needs**

Dredging was a recurring concern, with feedback emphasizing the need for more frequent, timely, strategic, and environmentally responsible dredging programs. Many stakeholders supported the establishment of funded, regular dredging programs. They also expressed strong support for publishing survey results, as these inform navigation hazard marking and provide useful information to the community, for example, helping clubs understand current channel depths. Some stakeholders suggested dredging should be funded from sources other than the Waterways Fund.

Collaboration with other agencies was encouraged to streamline dredging approvals. Respondents also encouraged greater collaboration with local councils and user groups to ensure dredging priorities reflect local knowledge and needs.

There was a desire for greater transparency in how dredging locations are prioritised and that local knowledge be taken into account in decision-making.

**Snapshot of insights from survey responses:**

Dredging is seen as very important or important by over 80% of respondents for improving waterway access for vessel navigation.

Respondents call for:

- A funded long-term dredging program
- Improved coordination between government, councils, and operators
- Streamlined environmental approvals

- Better data on dredging needs and impacts.
- Safety risks, frequency/severity of sediment build-up, and waterway usage data were noted as the top criteria for determining dredging priorities.

### Summary of other feedback

A number of other issues were raised that do not fit neatly under the above main focus areas but are important for future planning.

A consistent theme across a number of focus areas was for greater consideration of local input to decision making – whether that be to prioritise an investment in a specific boat ramp or how that boat ramp should be designed. Views were expressed that local insights are often not taken into account which reduces public trust in the process, particularly if an investment does not entirely meet local needs. The importance of transparency, accountability, and regular communication with stakeholders was also identified as an area for improvement.

Certain feedback highlighted that boaters are not the only stakeholders with an interest in boating infrastructure – which is used by broad cross section of community. Boating infrastructure also impacts on waterways which have an intrinsic value to the entire community, not just boaters.

While mooring management is not the subject of this discussion paper, noting that the Mooring Action Plan focusses on this broad issue, valuable feedback about the management of moorings was received and will be referred to the relevant team.

Other general feedback included:

- **Affordability and access:** General feedback was received around the rising costs associated with boating, such as mooring fees and boat licences. Many respondents emphasised the importance of keeping boating affordable and accessible for all users.
- **Enforcement and safety:** Many respondents called for stronger enforcement of existing rules related to parking, mooring and on-water safety. Requests were made for greater on-water presence and more visible policing across waterways.
- **Accountability and outcomes:** Some respondents suggested that project outcomes needed to be measured more effectively, highlighting the need for clearer metrics and evaluation of maritime infrastructure projects. Others suggested that a perceived focus on reports and reviews needed to be redirected to project delivery, particularly in regional areas. A perceived lack of transparency of the Waterways Funds was also noted in addition to the suggestion that funding should be allocated to projects based on funding source proportions (e.g. recreational vessels, maritime property) and improve customer outcomes. It was also suggested that a key measure of whether a project is funded should be whether the primary customers are the primary beneficiaries.
- **Communication and Transparency:** Improved communication around project progress, funding decisions and outcomes were raised by a number of respondents. There was a call for regular updates, greater transparency in how funds are allocated and spent, and clearer reporting on outcomes and benefits to boaters. Suggested channels included newsletters and online dashboards. There were also requests for more face-to-face engagement and ongoing opportunities for input to decisions and designs.
- **Alignment with other government processes:** Clarity was sought on how the MIP aligns with other Transport and government policies, plans and processes and how different agencies with responsibility for maritime infrastructure are aligned to ensure a whole of government position is taken. For example, feedback suggested ongoing alignment with the Marine Estate

Management Strategy (MEMS). Inconsistent participation by Transport for NSW in CMPs was also noted, calling for a more robust, proactive partnership with councils.

- **Specific feedback on infrastructure needs:** Specific feedback was provided on projects, infrastructure and locations that require investment. While the purpose of this discussion is to inform statewide investment priorities and processes, these insights are valuable to help inform future decisions, and this information has been shared with the Maritime Infrastructure Delivery Office. Feedback was also provided on a number of specific corrections and updates that should be incorporated into a future maritime infrastructure agenda.

## Initial analysis of feedback

The broad feedback received during this consultation process has been combined with feedback that has previously been received on the delivery of the MIP and boating infrastructure investment programs such as Boating Now. Based on initial analysis, there are a number of consistent themes and new ideas that present opportunities to improve how the NSW Government prioritises, supports and delivers maritime infrastructure in NSW.

While these themes and new ideas require more detailed consideration in consultation with internal and external stakeholders, a summary of these emerging themes and opportunities are provided below.

### Key Investment Locations

Future planning to inform the next maritime infrastructure agenda will consider how the current KILs and priority infrastructure outcomes should be revised, noting different views have been expressed about KILs being more flexible and since many of the existing priority infrastructure outcomes have been delivered.

The 14 KILs were identified following a resource-intensive process based on extensive data analysis (e.g. demographic trends, commercial vessel and commercial fishing performance, tourism and recreation performance) and stakeholder engagement to create a robust evidence base for the MIP which was the first such plan of its type. With this foundation now in place, rather than repeating the same process, it may be more efficient to instead rely on existing datasets, stakeholder networks, and ongoing understanding of infrastructure needs to streamline decision-making for identifying priority infrastructure outcomes. This adaptive approach would reduce administrative burden, provide greater transparency, and allow resources to be focused on delivering projects rather than duplicating analysis, while still maintaining alignment with strategic objectives.

### Maritime infrastructure prioritisation and delivery

Future planning to inform the next maritime infrastructure agenda will consider the significant and diverse feedback provided on prioritisation and delivery with a focus on, although not limited to, the following themes:

- The increased importance of investing in infrastructure maintenance and improving clarity on asset and maintenance registers.
- Responding to unique infrastructure needs of mooring licensees and residents that require vessels as an essential form of transport.
- Ensuring maritime infrastructure prioritisation and delivery is aligned with other relevant government strategies, policies and plans such as CMPs, relevant Master Plans, Disability

Inclusion Action Plan, Boat Ramp Guidelines, outcomes of previous reviews such as the Boating Now Review and Boating Now Evaluation,

- Greater clarification is required on the infrastructure and amenities that Transport invests in and why. For example, non-powered boating facilities, toilets and placemaking amenities at boat ramps, club facilities which primarily benefit club members but also provide access to general boat public, private assets such as slipways, on-water fuel services and sewage pump out facilities.
- Consideration of whether grants are the most suitable tool to invest in the highest priority maritime infrastructure noting that the grants model requires a willing, funded and capable applicant to deliver the infrastructure or amenity.
- How maritime infrastructure prioritisation can take into account local insights from local user groups and stakeholders and periodic surveys and audits of infrastructure to meet the changing local needs of a growing and diverse boating community.
- Risk mitigation should be a key driver for investment prioritisation alongside socio-economic outcomes.
- The appropriateness of the MIP objectives and outcomes based on feedback and further stakeholder consultation.

## Safe and sustainable access

Future planning to inform the next maritime infrastructure agenda will prioritise safe, sustainable and accessible maritime infrastructure that supports all waterway activities while protecting the environment and community values with a focus on the following themes:

- The need to invest in programs such as the Boating Infrastructure and Dredging Scheme to continue improving infrastructure and other amenities for all boaters, including people with disabilities and older boaters, and a long-term dredging program to maintain safer navigation while also exploring opportunities to reuse dredging material for beach nourishment and broader environmental benefits. Investment is also required into state-owned coastal infrastructure such as breakwater and regional harbour assets, which would not be funded under BIDS, to maintain and manage these assets.
- The need to review the locations of sewage pump-outs and suitable vessel maintenance facilities and explore alternative options to grant allocations for these critical projects ensuring such facilities are provided where they are needed most.
- The need for a greater emphasis on environmental outcomes in future maritime infrastructure investment decisions such as encouraging the use of sustainable material that minimise impact on the environment such as mesh surfaces to increase light penetration, integrating climate risk assessments and adaption measures to strengthen infrastructure resilience and maintaining existing assets over constructing new assets to reduce environmental impacts.
- Ensure planning and renewal processes recognise and protect maritime heritage and cultural values to preserve local identity and community connections.

## Technology and data

Future planning for the next maritime infrastructure agenda will prioritise strengthening the quality, integration and use of data and technology to support responsive, evidence-based investment and an improved user experience by sharing relevant data with the public.

Options will be explored to make the best use of existing and new data sources to improve forecast demand to inform future decisions and the best means to share this information in a user-friendly manner with the boating community and industry.

Options may include upgrading and consolidating existing online maritime infrastructure maps such as the Boat Ramp Locator to create a comprehensive one-stop information portal. This may include additional data such as the availability of boat trailer parking, disability access, toilet facilities and weather and tide conditions. There is also strong support for integrating multiple data sources (including GIS mapping, real-time monitoring, camera feeds, infrastructure audits and surveys) into an accessible, user-friendly platform.

Improving data collection on waterway use, infrastructure utilisation and boater behaviour will help enable more responsive and targeted planning, supporting both public and private investment decisions. There are also opportunities to leverage technologies such as sensors, solar lighting and automated monitoring to enhance safety and sustainability of maritime infrastructure as well as support asset management.

Ongoing monitoring of emerging technologies to ensure we have the best source of data to inform future decision and that we invest in infrastructure to support emerging technologies including electric and autonomous craft as required.

## Maritime infrastructure planning and property

The need for streamlined, transparent planning and leasing arrangements, improved coordination between agencies and less red tape to support business confidence and private sector investment remains a consistent theme which future planning to inform the next maritime infrastructure agenda will need to consider.

Consideration is required on the increasing competition for limited foreshore land between maritime, working harbour, recreational, residential and other commercial uses. This challenge is most prominent around Sydney Harbour but also exists on many other waterways with high populations in surrounding areas and impacts on availability of vessel maintenance and repair facilities, dry-stack and on-water storage and the various sailing, rowing and other boating clubs across the state.

There is also an opportunity to improve the public exposure and therefore the benefits derived from the [Sydney Harbour Boating Destinations](#) (SHBD) initiative, which allows the general boating public to access toilets, berths, power, pump-outs and other amenities at participating private marinas in exchange for discounted rents.

## Responding to dredging needs

Future planning to inform the next maritime infrastructure agenda will take into account the strong and broad support provided for more consistent funding towards a frequent and strategic dredging program.

## Summary of other feedback

Future planning to inform the next maritime infrastructure agenda will consider the insightful feedback on other maritime infrastructure investment issues that do not fall under the above themes. These issues include:

- The need for more appropriate performance metrics to enable the success of a future maritime infrastructure agenda to be evaluated based on relevant outcomes and objectives. The performance targets in the current MIP were difficult to measure against as many of these were

not directly influenced by the Plan. There is also a need for more transparency and timeliness in reporting of how MIP outcomes are being achieved which relies on improved data quality.

- Consideration is required on how community and stakeholder engagement can be improved during delivery of a new maritime infrastructure agenda. It is recognised there is a strong desire for local input to be taken into account in maritime infrastructure design and investments to ensure local needs are met and for better communication about project progress and transparency in how funds are allocated and spent.
- It is recognised that different approaches have been taken to planning and delivering maritime infrastructure in NSW. For example, the South Coast Network Plan was released in early 2023 which provide more granular infrastructure priorities, albeit without funding to deliver these programs and there are no such granular plans for other regions in NSW. A commitment is required for a consistent statewide approach to identifying and delivering boating infrastructure priorities which are aligned with other strategic plans such as CMPs, the Boat Ramp Facility Guidelines and the Transport Disability Inclusion Action Plan.
- It is recognised that maritime infrastructure and amenities that boaters use to safely access and enjoy a day on the water is owned by a broad cross section of government agencies, councils, community groups and the private sector. Responsibility for prioritisation, investment, delivery and maintenance of maritime infrastructure is similarly shared across different government and non-government organisations. Within Transport, these responsibilities rest in different divisions. A future agenda should therefore consider how to ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place to improve the effectiveness and efficiency in how maritime infrastructure is delivered in NSW to maximise the benefits from increasingly limited funded available for such investments.
- In recognition of the significant feedback provided on specific infrastructure, consideration is required on how to provide a process for boaters to provide feedback and input to support future investment decisions.

## Next steps

Feedback provided on the Maritime Infrastructure Discussion Paper has provided invaluable insights on stakeholders' views on how the Government should prioritise and invest in maritime infrastructure in the future, to be captured in a future maritime infrastructure agenda. These insight compliment previous feedback received from by internal and external stakeholders since the MIP was introduced.

The next step is for Transport to further develop on these themes and concepts informed by targeted consultation with key internal and external stakeholders including the Maritime Advisory Council, other relevant NSW Government agencies and peak bodies such as the Boating Industry Association. This will inform a draft maritime infrastructure agenda for final consultation in mid-2026 prior to finalisation and formal release.



© Transport for NSW

Users are welcome to copy, reproduce and distribute the information contained in this report for non-commercial purposes only, provided acknowledgement is given to Transport for NSW as the source.