

Hunter

Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan

Consultation summary report



Acknowledgment of Country

Transport for NSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands of the First Nations people of the Newcastle area, the Awabakal people.

Transport acknowledges the continuous deep relationship and connections by our First Nations people to their land, language, song, dance, art and stories spanning tens of thousands of years and pays respect to the local Awabakal community and their families. Transport pays respect to the ancestors that defended, walked and managed these lands for many generations before us and who have left a legacy of strong cultural wisdom and knowledge embedded within Awabakal Country. Transport acknowledges Newcastle being the capital and creative hub of the Hunter Region Awabakal Country.

The traditional Awabakal people are a group of First Nations people, located along the coastal area of the Hunter and Lake Macquarie regions of New South Wales. In the Awabakal language, Awaba is the word used for Lake Macquarie, one of the largest saltwater lakes in the southern hemisphere.

The Awabakal are bounded to the north-west by the Wonnarua, the Worimi and Guringai to the north-east and the Darkinung people to the south. Awaba is now the name of a small town in the region, Awabakal Country extends from the Hunter River to the north, the Pacific Ocean in the east, Wollombi to the west and Awaba/Lake Macquarie to the south.



Table of contents

1.	Executive summary	5
2.	Introduction.....	7
2.1	About the Hunter	7
3.	Purpose of this report	9
4.	Previous community consultation	9
5.	How we consulted.....	10
5.1	Consultation objectives	10
5.2	Consultation and engagement activities.....	11
5.2.1	Summary of activities.....	12
5.3	Communication materials.....	13
6.	Engagement snapshot and who we heard from.....	18
6.1	Survey respondents.....	19
6.2	Interactive map pins	20
6.3	Submissions.....	21
6.4	Hunter workshop	22
7.	What we heard	24
7.1	Key themes	25
7.1.1	First Nations.....	26
7.1.2	Safety	29
7.1.3	Public transport and connectivity.....	34
7.1.4	Active transport (walking and cycling)	38
7.1.5	Freight	42
7.1.6	Resilience	46
7.1.7	Land use/housing and successful places.....	50
7.1.8	Environment	54

7.1.9	Economy	58
7.1.10	Road condition.....	62
7.2	Plan objectives and challenges.....	66
7.2.1	Objectives of the draft Plan.....	66
7.2.2	Draft Challenges.....	68
7.3	Transport improvements.....	69
7.4	Other feedback and insights.....	69
8.	Thank you	70
9.	Appendices.....	71
9.1	Appendix A – Previous engagement as part of the Hunter Regional Transport Plan (RTP) ..	71
9.2	Appendix B – Summary of targeted engagement during development of the draft SRITP .	72
9.3	Appendix C – Media release	73
9.4	Appendix D – Briefings, workshops and community sessions	75
9.5	Appendix E – List of submission contributors in response to the Draft Plan	77
9.6	Appendix F – Notable changes in response to feedback.....	80

Cover image: Aerial coastline near Nobbys Head in Newcastle.

1. Executive summary

The Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (the Plan) provides a 20-year vision of the key transport priorities for the region to support community and transport needs, now and into the future.

Starting with Country, our Transport vision for the Hunter region is one where communities are well connected by high quality infrastructure and services to allow people to walk, ride, catch public transport or use their private vehicle safely.

During the Plan's development in 2024, Transport for NSW (Transport) engaged with key stakeholders such as local councils, government agencies and advocacy groups, to validate insights heard from previous transport planning consultation as well as obtain new feedback.

From 16 December 2024 to 28 February 2025, the Draft Plan was publicly displayed, and the broader community was invited to provide feedback via an online survey, email submission, dropping pins on an interactive map or by meeting the team at one of three community drop-in sessions.

Over the 10-week consultation period, Transport received almost 600 responses during the consultation period from residents, businesses, and public transport users, and active transport users as well as key stakeholders such as local councils, other government agencies, peak bodies, community organisations and groups with transport interests.

Feedback indicated strong support for all seven objectives of the Draft Plan. More than 50 per cent of respondents agreed that each objective was important or very important to them, validating the community's broad support of the objectives outlined in the Draft Plan.

Key findings from consultation include:

- improving public transport frequency, reliability, accessibility and connectivity is of utmost importance to the community
- safety is a key concern, especially for walking and cycling to help promote active transport as a viable alternative to private vehicles and create safe walkable neighbourhoods
- increasing rail services as well as new or upgrades to stations were consistent requests from the community, alongside request to electrify the Hunter line to reduce emissions
- future planning of freight was a key priority, including corridor preservations, increase in rail use, improvements to cater for oversize overmass needs and increase in heavy vehicle rest stops
- other issues such as land use planning and resilience were of significant interest to councils, other government agencies, and peak bodies with suggestions to support these issues.

More than 55 initiatives, a mixture of small and large infrastructure projects, programs, service improvements, and policy over the short, medium and longer-term, were developed to respond to the objectives and challenges outlined within the Draft Plan. During consultation, we heard valuable feedback on these, which has been taken into consideration to refine the Plan.

Following extensive engagement over the last 18 months, the Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (the Plan) is now complete.

The Plan identifies achievable actions that will optimise the transport network and improve transport options for the Hunter's growing population, workforce and visitors. This will support growth and enable the Hunter region to transition into an even more productive and vital economy, driven by key industry groups such as health, education, tourism, freight and logistics, and the renewable energy sector.

View the final Plan at www.transport.nsw.gov.au/huntersritp



Aerial of ocean pool and beach near Nobbys Head in Newcastle.

2. Introduction

The NSW Government is developing nine Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans (SRITP) for each of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) regions across regional NSW.

These plans will offer an integrated planning approach to transport infrastructure and services in the regions, reflecting the changing needs and transport demands of regional communities and provide coordinated solutions.

The Hunter Plan is focused on building communities that are connected by high quality infrastructure and services to allow people to walk, ride, catch public transport or use their private vehicle safely. This will support growth and enable the Hunter region to transition into an even more productive and vital economy, driven by key industry groups such as health, education, tourism, freight and logistics and renewable energy.

2.1 About the Hunter

The Hunter region is home to more than 775,000 people from diverse communities. It is a key destination for visitors and features stunning landscapes of national parks, beaches and rivers.

The region encompasses the traditional lands of Awabakal, Birpai, Darkinung, Geawegal, Gomeroi, Guringai, Wiradjuri, Worimi, and Wonnarua people who have been the land's traditional custodians for thousands of years. These communities have a rich cultural heritage and strong connections to the land and waterways.

Most of the current population residing in the key urban centres of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Maitland. Outside of these areas, there are many regional towns along the coast as well as inland communities.

The Hunter is the leading regional economy in NSW, contributing more than \$23 billion annually, driven by mining, agriculture, tourism, energy and manufacturing.

The region is a global gateway through its international Port and Airport and is also home to major health and education precincts. The region's economy is transitioning away from its dependence on coal and diversifying into a broader range of industries. This together with population and employment growth presents challenges for the region as more people are using the transport network and an increase in freight volumes.



Figure 1. Aerial view of Hunter River and farmland.

Local
Government
Areas



10

Lake Macquarie	Newcastle
Maitland	Singleton
Muswellbrook	Cessnock
Port Stephens	Dungog
Upper Hunter	MidCoast



960,000

Approximate projected
population of the Hunter
region by 2041

The Hunter is the largest regional
economy in Australia contributing
\$23 billion to the NSW economy.

\$23b



3. Purpose of this report

This report provides an overview of the consultation activities and feedback received during community consultation for the Draft Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (Draft Plan) for the Hunter.

Transport invited the community and stakeholders to provide feedback on the Draft Plan, which was placed on public exhibition for 10 weeks from 16 December 2024 to 28 February 2025. On request, key stakeholders were provided an extension of time, with all submissions received by mid-March.

This report provides an overview of:

- consultation and engagement activities
- summary of feedback by key themes
- how feedback has been considered
- next steps in the planning process.

4. Previous community consultation

Future transport planning in the Hunter region has been the focus of significant community consultation over the last three years. Input from the broader community and key stakeholders throughout consultation on the former draft Regional Transport Plan and the Draft Plan has also informed the direction of the Hunter Plan.

A summary of engagement to date is shown in the table below.

Timing	Plan	Purpose
Late 2022 to early 2023	Draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan	Feedback from the community and stakeholders on the now historic draft Regional Transport Plan. Comments provided through this consultation were used to inform the Draft Plan. An overview of this engagement is outlined in Appendix A .
May to September 2024	Development of Draft Plan	Key stakeholders were engaged during development of the Draft Plan. The focus was to validate feedback provided in late 2022/early 2023. Key stakeholders and the wider community through the Have Your Say page were also invited to provide additional feedback for consideration. An overview of targeted engagement is outlined in Appendix B . Full details are available in the Early Engagement Report .
December 2024 to February 2025	Public display of Draft Plan	The Draft Plan was publicly displayed for 10 weeks and feedback invited from the community and key stakeholders by the end of February, to inform the Plan. Key stakeholders were provided an extension of time on request. This report summarises this consultation.

5. How we consulted

There has been an extensive amount of engagement as part of developing the Draft Plan. This consultation builds on previous consultation to help validate what we have heard and comments on where we may be able to improve.

5.1 Consultation objectives

We engaged with the community and key stakeholders on the Draft Plan to:

- raise community awareness of the Draft Plan, it's vision and purpose
- provide an opportunity for feedback on the Draft Plan and tell us if we have missed anything
- understand community priorities and obtain feedback on the initiatives identified
- gain insight into the importance of the Draft Plan's objectives
- understand what transport improvements are most important
- gain insight to verify the challenges outlined in the Draft Plan
- obtain feedback on the key themes and build on what we have heard previously
- manage community expectations about transport opportunities and challenges of the region.

Target audience

Our target audience for this consultation included:

Broader community:

- communities and residents in the Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, MidCoast, Muswellbrook, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Singleton and Upper Hunter local government areas
- Transport customers including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists including commuters
- local businesses in the region
- visitors and tourists to the region
- schools and educational establishments.

Key stakeholders:

- State Members of Parliament
- local councils and Hunter Joint Organisation
- NSW Government agencies
- First Nation Organisations and Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- key business and industry bodies including, Urban Development Institute of Australia and Committee for the Hunter
- health services, including disability and emergency services
- other stakeholder and community groups with an interest in the future transport planning.

Key stakeholders were extensively engaged during the development of the Draft Plan.

In addition to the above, more than 180 stakeholders were identified as program wide stakeholders who would have an interest in all nine SRITPs. These included statewide agencies and organisations, Members of the Legislative Council (MLCs) and Senators and industry, such as freight.

5.2 Consultation and engagement activities

During public exhibition from December 2024 and February 2025, Transport invited the Hunter community to provide feedback on the Draft Plan.

A variety of communication tools and activities were used to encourage participation from key stakeholders and the wider community.

A landing page for all SRITPs was established on the NSW Government Have Your Say website in 2024 with links to dedicated regional Have Your Say pages, including the [Hunter](#).

This page was updated for the display of the Draft Plan to include:

- A copy of the Draft Plan, which was downloaded more than 2850 times
- A copy of the Early Engagement Plan, which was downloaded 370 times
- Hunter StoryMap – interactive maps and dashboards to share valuable data and insights that helped to inform the vision, challenges, and opportunities of the Draft Plan
- Council assets tools and resources, including a fact sheet, poster and social media tile
- An LGA summary for each Council area.

The Have Your Say page was the primary method of gathering feedback. On this page, the community could choose to provide feedback via a survey, by dropping pins on an interactive map or by making a submission. The dedicated project email address for all SRITPS continued to be utilised to allow the project team to communicate with stakeholders and enable written feedback submissions to be made.

9,850+



Views of the ‘Have your say’ page

5,600+



Link clicks on social posts

8



Briefings, workshops and meetings

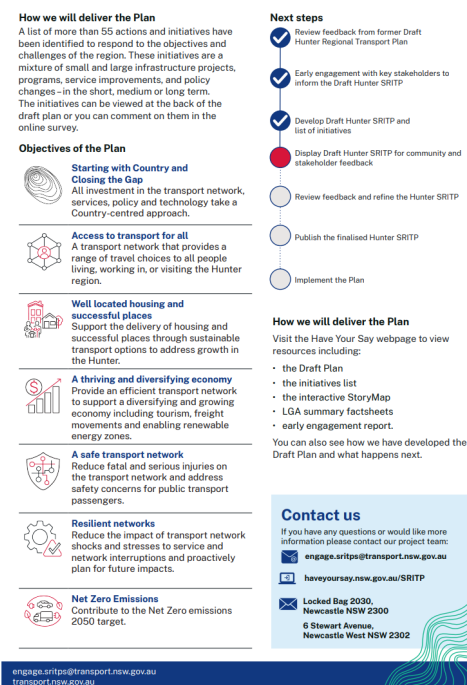
5.2.1 Summary of activities

A summary of the consultation and engagement activities are listed in the table below.

Method	Details
Local media	A media release was issued on 16 December 2024 to local media outlets across the region by the Hon Jenny Aitchison, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and Yasmin Catley Minister for the Hunter (Appendix C).
Have Your Say page	A NSW Government Have Your Say page provided the community with the opportunity to complete an online survey and drop pins on an interactive map. The link to this page was promoted in the media release, via social media and in emails to key stakeholders. During the public exhibition period, there were 9850 visits to the Hunter SRITP page.
Email	Emails notifying key stakeholders of the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft SRITP were sent from 16 December 2024 and reminders provided throughout the exhibition period. This included bespoke emails to local MP offices and local councils, inviting them to use the assets and tools developed for them to help promote the display. Community and stakeholders were invited to provide their feedback via email as well as via the Have Your Say page.
Stakeholder briefings	Three briefings were held with key stakeholders ahead of the public display, presenting a high-level overview of the Draft Plan and inviting them to book further briefings once consultation opened to discuss the Draft Plan in detail and provide feedback. This offer was taken up by one stakeholder.
Social media	A social media campaign was developed for the duration of the consultation. This included five geotargeted posts on the Transport for NSW Facebook page inviting feedback on the Draft Plan as well as informing the community of drop-in sessions to find out more about the Draft Plan. Over the consultation period, the combined reach of the posts was more than 417,000 users with over 500 reactions, comments and shares and more than 5,600 link clicks.
In-person community information sessions	Face-to-face community drop-in sessions were held at Newcastle, Maitland and Taree in February 2025.
Workshop	An in-person workshop held on 19 February 2025 with councils, industry and other key stakeholders. Attendees delved into the challenges, key directions and initiatives of the Draft Plan to provide feedback on items that were strongly supported, need further work or missing.

Transport values the contributions communities and stakeholders provided during this consultation. Ongoing conversations and insights gained from the continuing engagement has been pivotal to shape the Plan.

A suite of communication materials was created to support consultation and engage the community. This included factsheets and summaries for each of the LGAs, which were designed to highlight elements of the Draft Plan relevant to each local area. A sample of communication materials is below.



LGA summary examples



In numbers
Newcastle

+20.4%
Newcastle is projected to have a **population** of approx. 201,670 in 2041.

+41.9%
The number of **employed people** in Newcastle is expected to grow by approx. 52,300 by 2041.

+11,000
The NSW Government has targeted 11,000 **new homes** for Newcastle under the 5-year housing targets.

The Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan aligns with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Hunter Regional Plan 2041 to efficiently respond to anticipated changes in land use, demographics and travel demand across the Hunter.

What we heard about Newcastle from our stakeholders

The development of the Draft Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Plan was informed by what we heard from the community during engagement in 2022/23, engagement on our Have Your Say pin drop function, and from key stakeholders over the past 12 months.

These are a few of the key Newcastle issues we heard:

- Opportunity to enhance the frequency and connectivity of public transport services, including increasing train and bus frequencies and integrating services better.
- Expanding and upgrading cycleways, pedestrian crossings, and transport hubs are crucial for safety and convenience. Key areas for improvement include introducing pedestrian crossings with push-button flashing lights, addressing dangerous sections like the Griffiths Road rail bridge, and extending bus routes to major destinations.
- Increased parking at key transport hubs and considering multi-story car parks as important for accommodating growing demand.
- Improving traffic flow and reducing congestion through dedicated bus lanes, optimised traffic light sequencing, and infrastructure upgrades are important.
- Enhancements in pedestrian and cyclist safety, better accessibility for people with disabilities, and increased community involvement in transport planning are needed.
- Suggestions include revitalising old tram lines, expanding light rail, and improving traffic management at key intersections.

OFFICIAL



In numbers
Maitland

+61.1%
Maitland is projected to have a **population** of approx. 144,540 in 2041.

+55.5%
The number of **employed people** in Maitland is expected to grow by approx. 19,000 by 2041.

+5,300
The NSW Government has targeted 5,300 **new homes** for Maitland under the 5-year housing targets.

The Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan aligns with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Hunter Regional Plan 2041 to efficiently respond to anticipated changes in land use, demographics and travel demand across the Hunter.

What we heard about Maitland from our stakeholders

The development of the Draft Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Plan was informed by what we heard from the community during engagement in 2022/23, engagement on our Have Your Say pin drop function, and from key stakeholders over the past 12 months.

These are a few of the key Maitland issues we heard:

- Opportunity to expand the rail network, including a passenger and freight rail line connecting Maitland, Morisset, Kurri Kurri, and Cessnock, and for a new train station near Maitland Hospital.
- A request for more frequent train services, light rail options, and improved bus services with better reliability and coverage.
- Recommendations for widening roads, adding dual lanes, constructing new overpasses, and enhancing traffic management at critical intersections to alleviate congestion.
- Suggestions for improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, including safe crossings and better access to transport hubs.

OFFICIAL

'Have Your Say' page, including the draft Plan which was accessible on the Hunter page

🔍 English ▾ Login Join

Living in NSW Working and business What's happening Have your say Easy Read

[Home](#) > [Have your say](#) > Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans

Have your say

Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans

+ Follow

Welcome to the future of regional transport in New South Wales. Our Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans (SRITPs) are at the heart of reimagining how we connect our communities, support local economies, and plan for sustainable growth in nine regions across the state. These comprehensive plans are tailored to address the evolving transportation needs and aspirations of regional NSW over a 20-year horizon, ensuring everyone has access to safe, reliable, and efficient transport options.

Whether you commute daily, depend on local transport services, or are part of the vibrant network that keeps our regional economies thriving, your voice is crucial in shaping the SRITPs. Explore through the links below for each region share your thoughts and be a part of crafting transport solutions that work for everyone.

Your Region, Your Transport, Your Voice

Select your region below to learn more about the SRITPs, view the delivery dates, and provide your valuable feedback:

Hunter
Read our Draft Plan for the Hunter.
[Learn more](#) →

South East and Tablelands
Read our Draft Plan for the South East and Tablelands.
[Learn more](#) →

Central Coast
[Learn more](#) →

Strategic Regional Integrated Trans...

Timeline

Open and listening

We want to hear from you. Select your region and share your thoughts.

Under review

Thanks for your input. We're reviewing what you told us.

Sharing what we heard

We'll share with you insights we learn from your feedback.

[See less](#)

Subscribe for updates

Hunter SRITP | Consultation Summary Report



Emails

Transport for NSW

Hunter
Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan

 Transport for NSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and pays respect to Elders past and present.



Transport for NSW is committed to shaping the future of transport for regional NSW and we need your input.

We're inviting you to have your say on the draft Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (Draft Plan), to help inform the final transport priorities for the region.

The Draft Plan will shape how we tackle everything from road infrastructure, public transport services, freight challenges to safety improvements. Whether you're passionate about walking, cycling, buses, trains, or roads, your feedback is important to us!

Have your say

If you live, work or play across the Hunter, we want to hear from you!

We appreciate that you may not have read the Draft Plan, so we have designed a quick survey to easily provide feedback on the key themes we've heard about so far.

You can pick which themes relate best to your interests or ideas. Tell us what you think about the challenges and initiatives we've identified and let us know if we've missed anything.

Alternatively, you can also send us more detailed feedback by emailing engage.sritps@transport.nsw.gov.au or uploading a submission to the Have Your Say page.

Feedback is open until Friday 28 February 2025.

[COMPLETE THE SURVEY](#) [UPLOAD A SUBMISSION](#)

View the draft plan and learn more

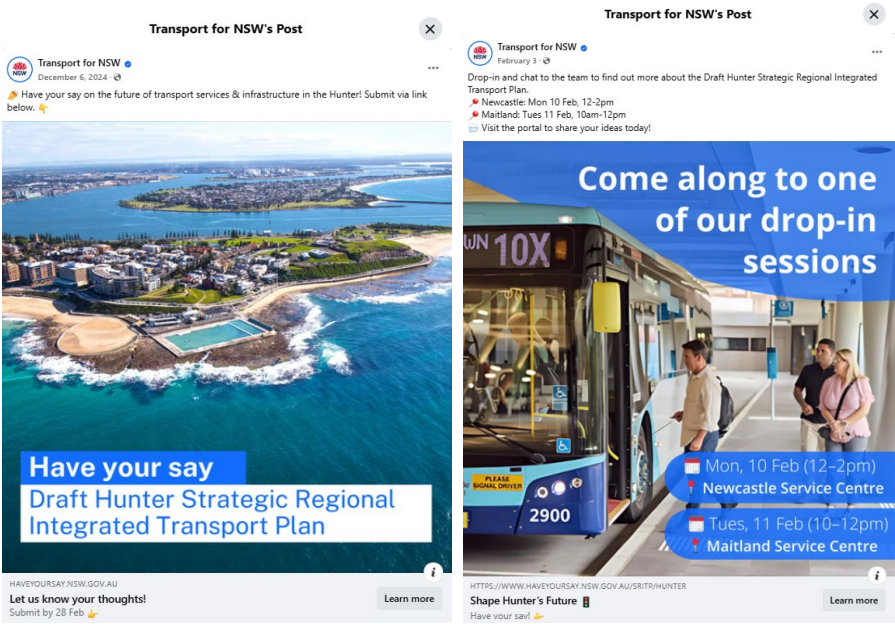
Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans are a critical part of Transport for NSW's broader strategy to meet the evolving transport needs of our regional communities.

The Draft Plan for the Hunter builds on the comprehensive work already carried out on the previous Hunter Regional Transport Plan and has been developed with input from key stakeholders.

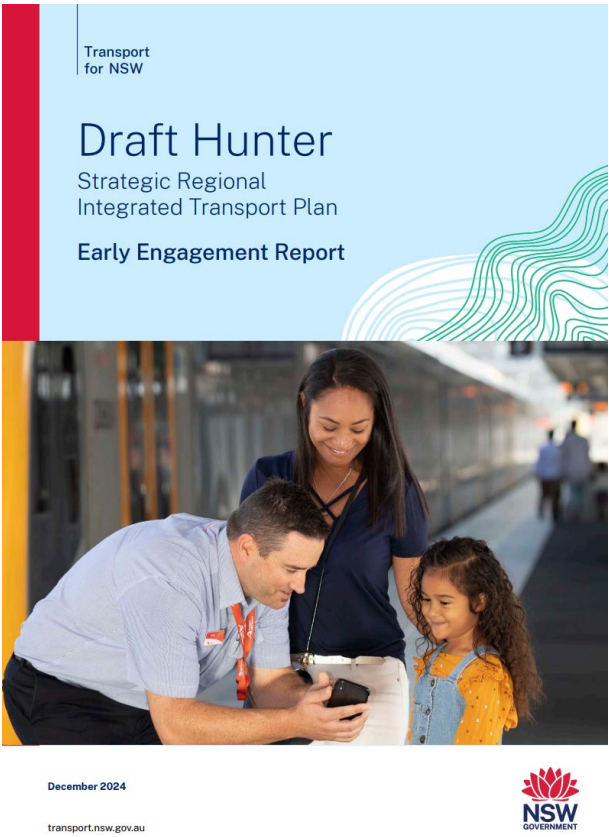
The Draft Plan is focused on delivering integrated, long-term solutions that will drive economic growth, improve connectivity, and enhance the quality of life for residents in the Hunter region. It also identifies actions we can take to deliver better transport policies, services and infrastructure to the region.



Social media advertising examples



Early engagement report



A report summarising engagement carried out while developing the draft Plan was published in December 2024. This report detailed who we engaged with and what we heard.

StoryMap



Hunter StoryMap

Explore our interactive maps and dashboards and learn more about your region.

[Learn more](#) →

A StoryMap for the Hunter was created to share valuable data and insights that inform the vision, challenges and opportunities for the region. [View the StoryMap.](#)

Social tiles
for Ministers
and MPs

Help shape the future of transport in the Hunter

Follow the link
below to learn more
and have your say



The Hunter Strategic
Regional Integrated
Transport Plan



Help shape the future of transport in the Hunter

Follow the link
below to learn more
and have your say



The Hunter Strategic
Regional Integrated
Transport Plan





Have your say

Transport in the Hunter
Join one of our drop-in sessions



Newcastle Service Centre, Mon 10 Feb, 12-2pm
Maitland Service Centre, Tues 11 Feb, 10am-12pm
Taree Service Centre, Thurs 13 Feb, 11am-1pm



Have your say

Transport in the Hunter
Join one of our drop-in sessions



Newcastle Service Centre, Mon 10 Feb, 12-2pm
Maitland Service Centre, Tues 11 Feb, 10am-12pm
Taree Service Centre, Thurs 13 Feb, 11am-1pm

6. Engagement snapshot and who we heard from

Transport received a total of 594 responses during the consultation period.

Feedback was provided in the following ways:

- 386 online survey responses
- 144 pin drops
- 68 submissions via the Have Your Say page, email or mail.

In addition to this there was a quick poll on the Have Your Say landing page that received 327 votes.

There were eight workshops, briefings and community drop-in sessions held as part of the consultation of the display of the Draft Plan. See **Appendix D**.

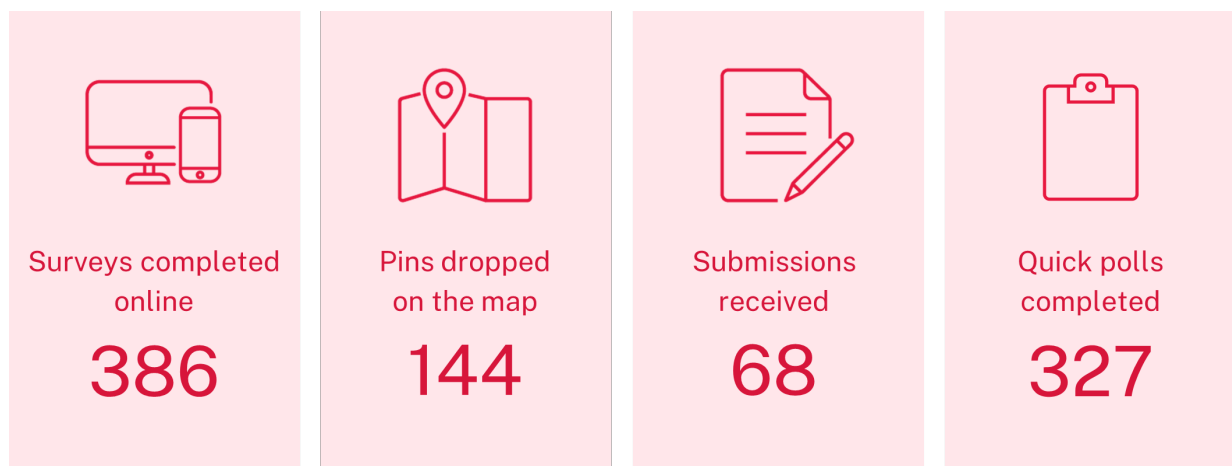


Figure 2. Aerial view of winding Pacific Motorway (M1) in Hunter Valley region.

6.1 Survey respondents

A total of 386 surveys were completed during the display period. The survey took the opportunity to collect information on respondents, such as age and local government area, to help identify stakeholder groups that may not be represented and assist with analysis of feedback to inform the Plan.

To guide respondent feedback, questions aligned to the objectives, challenges, and initiatives of the Draft Plan, which are discussed more in subsequent sections of this report.

Of those that completed a survey, 377 were individuals providing feedback, with the remaining nine providing feedback on behalf of an organisation.

Of those who completed the online survey, 92 per cent were residents of the region, 3.6 per cent worked in the region, with the remaining respondents either visitors to the region or from outside of the region.

Most individuals who completed the online survey identified they were aged between 40 and 59 years of age (43.5 per cent). The remaining respondents identified as 60-89 age group (28 per cent), 20-39 age group (25.5 per cent), under 20 age group (1.5 per cent) and remainder preferring not to say.

In terms of gender, survey respondents were fairly even with around 50 per cent identifying as female and around 46 per cent as male. Just over two per cent preferred not to say and just under two per cent identified as non-binary.

To help us better understand the context of feedback, we asked respondents to provide which local government area (LGA) they reside in. The largest percentage of feedback was provided by the Newcastle (35.8 per cent), Lake Macquarie (23.6 per cent), and Maitland (10.6 per cent) LGAs.

What best describes you?
(survey respondents)

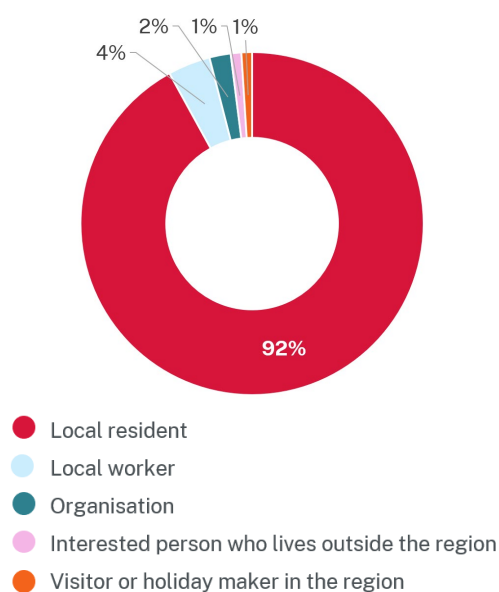


Figure 3. Pie graph showing stakeholder group of survey respondents.

Distribution of respondents by LGA
(survey respondents)

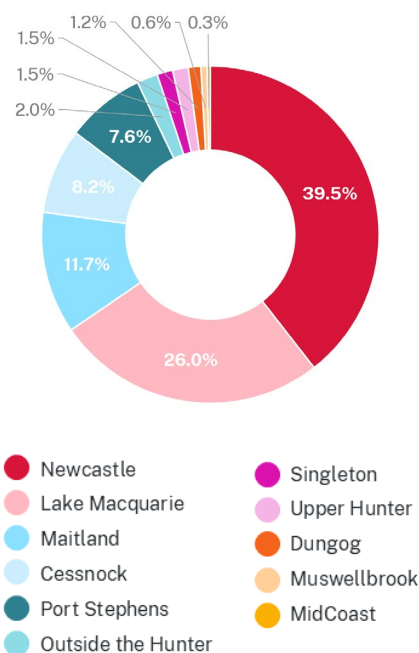


Figure 4. Pie graph showing distribution of survey respondents by LGA.

6.2 Interactive map pins

The interactive map gave the community and stakeholders the ability to drop a pin on a specific location of interest and leave a comment. See Figure 6 on the following page.

People were asked to align their comment with one of the seven Draft Plan objectives:

- Access to transport for all
- A safe transport network
- Resilient networks
- Net zero emissions
- Well-located housing and successful places
- A thriving and diversifying economy
- Starting with Country.

At the conclusion of public exhibition, there were 144 comments provided against six of the objectives. See Figure 5 adjacent for breakdown of objective alignment.

Participants were asked to align their feedback to a specific initiative where applicable. Ten of the 144 comments called out four draft initiatives, representing 6.9 per cent of the total comments received. However, much of the feedback against these initiatives did not align with the initiative purpose. For example, feedback on Initiative 1 (Continue replacement of timber bridges to increase resilience of the road network and address first and last mile issues for agribusiness) highlighted ongoing traffic issues in the Warners Bay and Lake Macquarie area requiring infrastructure upgrades, such as road widening and roundabouts, however made no mention of timber bridges or replacement.

Comments from the map pins highlight a range of transport-related concerns and priorities for the Hunter, focusing on improving road and public transport infrastructure, addressing regional disadvantages, and enhancing transport planning and coordination.

Distribution of feedback by objective
(aligned to pin drops)

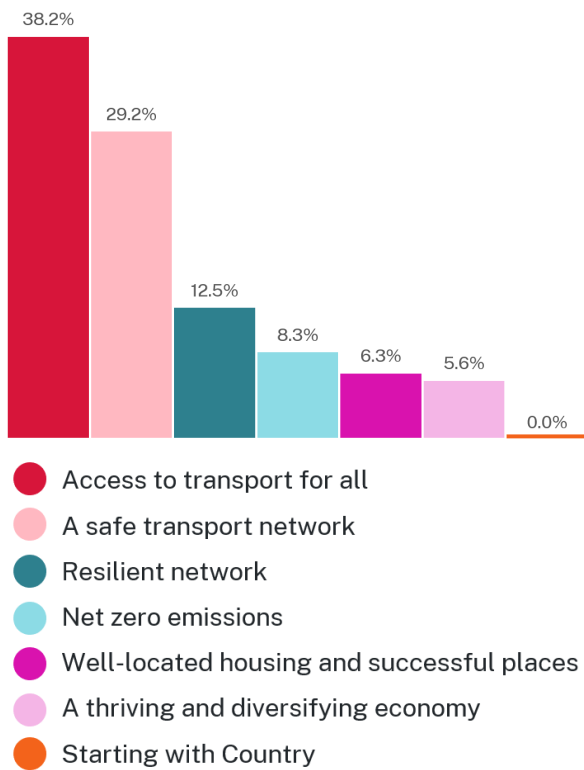


Figure 5. Bar graph showing alignment of objectives selected against pins on interactive map.

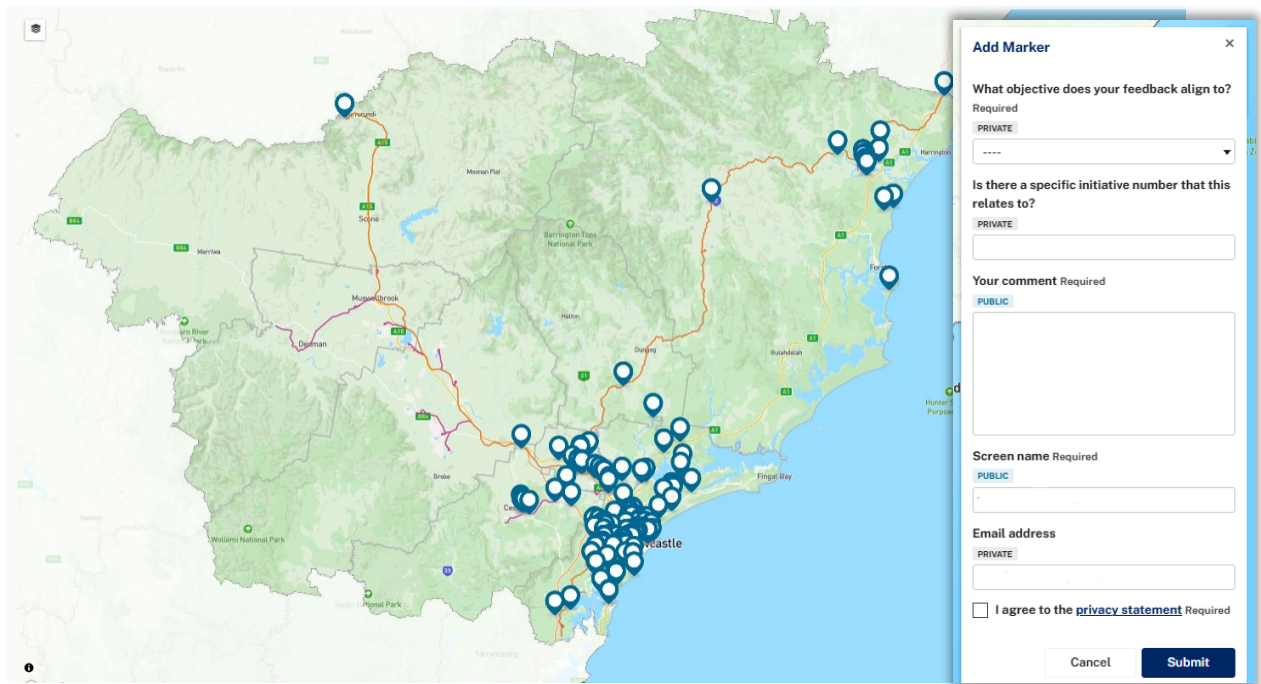


Figure 6. Pins placed on interactive map and online form to add a pin.

6.3 Submissions

In addition to the survey and interactive map, Transport also invited feedback through written submissions via email or the Have Your Say page.

During the consultation period, we received 68 submissions from various stakeholders and community members including councils, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, members of the community, peak bodies and industry. See **Appendix E** for a list of submissions received.

Across the 68 submissions, feedback on the Draft Plan included consideration of alternate points of view and proposed a range of additional priorities. Common themes include the need to better align population and growth projections, strengthen public transport connectivity and frequency, prioritise active transport infrastructure, and ensure sufficient funding and timely delivery of critical road and rail upgrades. Several submissions also emphasise the importance of integrating transport and land use planning, as well as addressing the specific needs of industries like tourism and freight.

6.4 Hunter workshop

During the display period, Transport hosted a workshop with a number of ‘trip-generating’ stakeholders, including councils and industry stakeholders. Attendees are listed in **Appendix D**. This provided an opportunity to walk through the key directions outlined in the Draft Plan and ‘pressure test’ the draft list of initiatives with a wide range of stakeholders and identify any potential gaps.

The workshop was divided into two sessions. The first session included an overview of the challenges and key initiatives outlined in the Draft Plan followed by an open discussion about the initiatives. Stakeholders were asked:

- Have we got the challenges and key directions right?
- What needs further work?
- What is missing?

During discussions, several key issues were highlighted with population projections and the role of transport infrastructure in supporting the Renewable Energy Zones (REZ). Concerns were raised about what can be a confusing process for determining developer liabilities for transport infrastructure, and the need for more robust and transparent methods for infrastructure contributions and costs.

The development of the John Hunter Hospital precinct was a point of discussion, with a suggestion the expansion of the precinct wasn’t adequately captured in the Draft Plan. Concerns were raised about the growing demand for car parks due to the lack of integrated transport options and the need for more accessible transport to centralised healthcare services.

Several stakeholders called for bolder statements in support of the Federal Government’s High Speed Rail plans, suggesting the Draft Plan’s initiatives could be stronger and more ambitious.

Feedback from various stakeholders, highlighted the need for more detailed planning, including prioritisation of actions, clarity on cost apportionment, and a comprehensive infrastructure list for the region. The importance of active transport and freight movements were also emphasised, with concerns that these aspects were not sufficiently addressed in the document.

Regarding the overall delivery of the Plan, the discussion acknowledged the excellent work in identifying the challenges and opportunities, however highlighted the need for clarity on the overall network strategy and the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders.

The second session was a structured activity where stakeholders were divided into four groups and rotated around four stations. Each station focused on initiatives that aligned with specific objectives. Stakeholders were asked to review initiatives and determine if they agreed/endorsed an initiative, identified any requiring amendment or further detail, or if there was something missing from the initiative list all together.

This exercise generated more than 255 pieces of feedback on the 55 draft initiatives outlined in the Draft Plan. Transport Orientated Developments, airport connectivity, on-going collaboration and engagement and how transport can better support regional growth areas, and how initiatives targeting Net zero emissions could be strengthened all received attention.



Cyclist going over pedestrian bridge on Fernleigh Awabakal Shared Track, Belmont, 2024.

7. What we heard

Feedback from surveys, drop pins and submissions have been collated and form the basis of this section of the report. It outlines a high-level summary of key items raised and Transport's response.

Each piece of feedback has been collated into themes or discussed in the following sections:

- Key themes:
 - First Nations
 - Safety
 - Public transport and connectivity
 - Active transport (walking and cycling)
 - Freight and heavy vehicles
 - Resilience and emergency preparedness
 - Land use / housing and successful places
 - Environment
 - Economy
 - Road condition
- Plan objectives and challenges
- Transport improvements
- Other feedback and insights.

While all feedback has been taken into consideration during preparation of the Plan, some comments are beyond the scope of the Plan. This may have been because feedback or suggestions did not fall within Transport's area of influence, for example, specific minor maintenance issues such as pothole repair, or was not relation to transport or considered best part of Transport standard operational business. This feedback has been forwarded to appropriate subject matter experts within Transport or to other government agencies and organisations as required.

Lists of notable changes to the Draft Plan as influenced by the public consultation can be found in **Appendix F**.

Note, the results presented in this report represent the views of those that provided feedback as part of this consultation.

7.1 Key themes

Through early engagement with key stakeholders and the community, ten key feedback themes emerged, which guided the development of the Draft Plan including the challenges, objective and initiatives identified for the region.

During exhibition of the Draft Plan, survey respondents were provided a list of the previously identified themes to help guide feedback that was of interest to them.

The graph adjacent shows the themes survey respondents selected (via the survey) to provide feedback on. Survey respondents could choose multiple themes to make comments.

Feedback from submissions and survey pins has also been analysed against these key themes, with high level summary of what we heard against each theme outlined below.

The Draft Plan included a list of over 55 initiatives. The draft initiatives provided a mixture of small and large infrastructure projects, programs, services improvements and policy changes – in the short, medium or longer-term.

A key component of the survey sought to identify which initiatives respondents considered most important to deliver over the next decade. For each theme selected, the relevant draft initiatives for delivery of that theme were displayed allowing the respondent to select the initiative(s) they felt were the most important. It is important to note, draft some draft initiatives related to multiple themes if appropriate. The top five initiatives selected by respondents are listed within each theme in the sections below.

Number of pieces of feedback provided on each of the key themes (survey respondents)

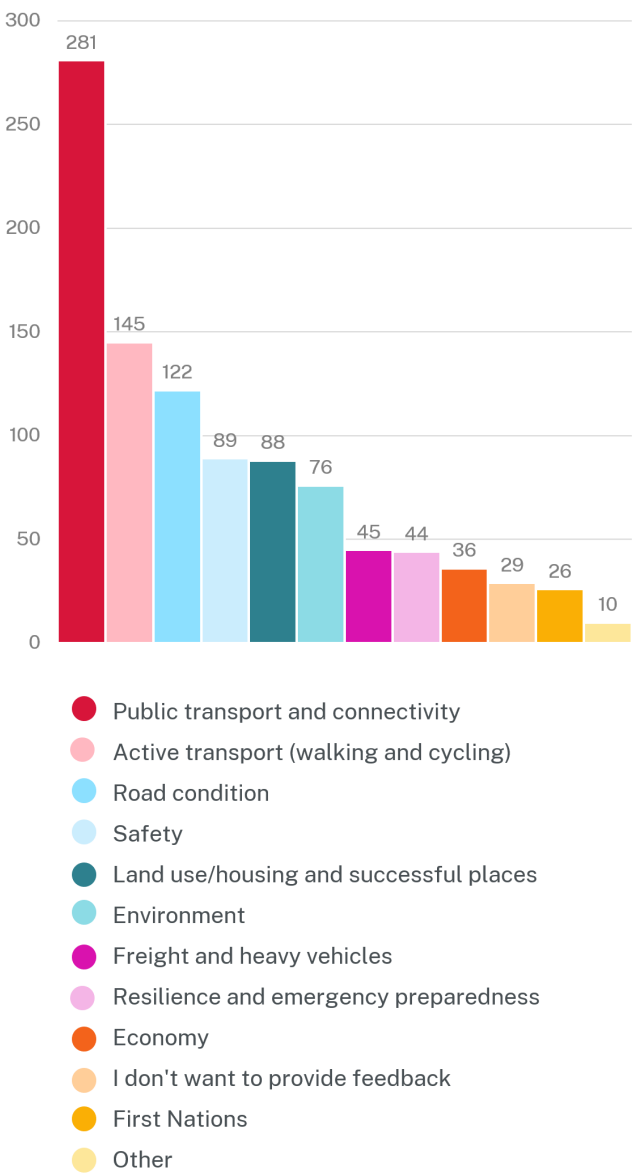


Figure 7. Bar chart showing themes survey respondents selected to provide feedback on.



7.1.1 First Nations

We recognise each Aboriginal community within the Hunter and throughout NSW is unique. Transport is intrinsically linked to many of the challenges faced by First Nations people –including access to healthcare, education, and employment.

Consultation with First Nations stakeholders during development of the Draft Plan highlighted a number of recurring issues across all First Nations groups, with challenges accessing and using transport, but also opportunities for improvement.

Connectivity to and from Aboriginal communities is a major issue. Many Aboriginal communities are outside of main town centres and experience a lack of public and active transport connectivity to town (services) and cultural places.

Planning with Country demonstrates Transport’s commitment to incorporate Aboriginal culture and heritage, and understand Aboriginal community and transport needs, from project start through to completion.

Stakeholders support Country being embedded within the Plan and that its significance needs to continue to be carefully considered, including through implementation of initiatives, which need to align with Closing the Gap goals.

We also heard that we need to work in partnership with First Nations organisations and businesses to support economic, social, and cultural outcomes for these communities.

There were 16 survey participants that provided suggestions or comments on the needs of Aboriginal people to ensure Aboriginal communities are heard when planning transport projects and services.



16

Survey respondents provided suggestions and comments on this key themes



10+

Meetings with Aboriginal stakeholders



Figure 8. An Australian Aboriginal flag flying in front of an Australian flag © 2022 Sarah Richardson, Austockphoto.

Summary of feedback received:

Item raised	Summary
Engagement and consultation with the Aboriginal stakeholder	• Support for Country to be embedded within the Plan. • Stakeholders emphasised engagement with Aboriginal elders and community members is crucial, especially as LALCs are some of the largest landowners within LGAs. Listening to First Nations people can provide valuable insights and help design better transport networks that connect communities. • Requests for Transport to regularly engage with providers of Aboriginal services as part of projects to make sure that transport needs for the most vulnerable are met. • Suggestion that involvement needs to extend beyond consultation of projects to include active participation in policy-making and cultural governance.
Cultural recognition and integration	• It was highlighted that Aboriginal Cultural Heritage needs to be considered at all stages of Transport projects, with cultural officers involved from start to finish of projects to ensure identification and recognition of heritage items. • There is a need for clarity on the long-term management and archiving of Aboriginal artefacts that are discovered on Transport sites.
Future planning and resilience	• As landowners, there is opportunity for rezoning of land for housing, which would require further road upgrades beyond what is identified in the Draft Plan. • Suggestions to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into natural disaster planning, which can help increase the resilience of local communities.
Transport and accessibility	• There was feedback to provide public and active transport connections to Aboriginal communities and connect with local places of significance.

How the Plan reflects this feedback

Transport's commitment to taking a Country-centred approach to planning is demonstrated with its first Transport Objective - Starting with Country. As a key objective of the Plan, it recognises the need for all transport investment, services, policy and technology to take a Country-centred approach. This includes supporting Aboriginal economic independence, ensuring Aboriginal people are connected safely to the economy and socially through transport solutions, and driving transformative action to deliver systemic change.

The Plan outlines specific outcomes and indicators to achieve this objective, such as increasing opportunities for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to access and manage land and waterways (initiative viii), growing the number of Aboriginal businesses involved in transport projects, and addressing Aboriginal road trauma and safety incidents on public transport. The Plan also commits to embedding Aboriginal outcomes within each transport initiative and delivering a program of Aboriginal placemaking activities.

Transport will work towards facilitating accessible, affordable, and safe transport options for Aboriginal communities across the Hunter, ensuring Aboriginal communities are not disadvantaged when accessing transport (Section 5.1.1). This includes providing reliable and culturally sensitive transport options, especially in relation to maintaining connections to heritage and cultural tradition, coordinating services between transport and healthcare or educational services and promoting community led services for transport solutions, providing a collaborative approach for flexibility and catering to the needs of the community.

The Plan emphasises the importance of partnering with Aboriginal stakeholders, including Local Aboriginal Land Councils, to develop local transport and services plans (Initiative 3) that ensure the right services are connecting to the right places at the right times for Aboriginal communities. This collaborative, community-led approach aims to improve access to essential services and opportunities for Aboriginal people across the Hunter region.

Key updates in the Plan:

- correction to Acknowledgement of Country and the tense of a reference to the Awabakal people
- removed reference to Mooney Mooney, as it is outside the area of the Plan.

Key updates to initiatives:

- revised wording of initiative to confirm Local Aboriginal Transport and Services Plans will be co-designed in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- added state-wide initiatives to ensure that transport projects consider importance of access to waterways, cultural sites and lands.



7.1.2 Safety

A safe transport network is vital to provide greater mobility across the Hunter region and to encourage greater uptake of active and public transport options to reduce reliance on private vehicles. Reducing fatalities and serious injuries on the transport network is essential for improving safety for all transport users in the region.

Safety remains a key topic of focus, with a broad range of concerns including motorist safety on the road network, improved infrastructure for active transport connections, as well as personal safety when using public transport.

Many comments mentioned that public transport and parking areas need to be made safer to encourage increased use. Feedback discussed that frequent services, better security and increased staff presence, improved accessibility and well-maintained stations would create a more welcoming environment and naturally increase public transport usage.

The importance of developing and providing safe, connected cycling and pedestrian networks were consistently raised, particularly around transport hubs and key destinations. There was support for initiatives to expand and upgrade cycling infrastructure, including the Shiraz to Shore trail, and called for these active transport improvements to be incorporated into all new transport projects. Many respondents advocated for the implementation of 30 km/h speed limits in residential areas to encourage cycling and walking, creating safer and more active neighbourhoods.



86

Survey respondents provided feedback on initiatives



42

Survey respondents provided other suggestions and comments



9

Submission responses raised safety



Figure 9. Family enjoying Belmont Wharf, Belmont © Destination NSW.

Summary of feedback received

Item raised	Summary
Road infrastructure	• Calls for significant upgrades to address safety and congestion on major roads, such as upgrades to key intersections, requests for dual carriageways as well as upgrades to overburdened bridges and interchanges. • Concerns raised over sharp turns, poor road condition, aging bridges, and poor drainage on regional roads, leading to increased safety risk. • Discussion around inadequate infrastructure for, and impact of heavy vehicles on the network, including pavement damage, insufficient lane widths. • Responses highlighted the importance of upgrading infrastructure in high-growth areas to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the region. • Calls to address safety concerns at rail level crossings.
Traffic management and behaviour	• There was emphasis on future planning for increases in freight and traffic. • Calls to improve signage and information provision to enhance driver awareness and reduce accident risks. • Advocacy for lower speed limits, particularly in residential areas to promote safer and more active communities, with suggestions to apply 80km/h on undivided regional roads, 40km/h in urban areas and 30km/h to local streets and shopping precincts.
Public transport enhancements	• Discussion around the need for expanded public transport services that are more frequent, reliable and accessible to help improve safety. • Suggestions to provide better connections between different modes of transport. • Calls for increased staffing and safety measures at train stations to help deter antisocial behaviour. • Calls to improve passenger behaviour and driver protection, notably for train services to encourage student use, with suggestions to explore alternatives to traditional policing, such as customer service ambassador programs. • Requests for accessible information for all users, including those with limited digital or language skills. • Suggestions for improved branding and education campaigns to create a more user-friendly public transport experience.
Cycling infrastructure	• Discussion on the need for dedicated or separated cycling infrastructure would improve safety for cyclists and motorists, also helping make active transportation a safer and more attractive option. • We heard calls to connect gaps in the pedestrian and cycling networks that were viewed as unsafe. • Calls for improved pedestrian infrastructure, including better pedestrian crossings, signage and traffic-calming measures,

	especially in areas with high pedestrian traffic, such as school zones, busy intersections and residential areas adjacent main traffic corridors. • Discussion of importance of tree canopy and shade for a liveable and usable transport network, which can impact the safety and comfort of active transport users.
Policy alignment	• Suggestions that a clearer transport hierarchy that prioritises different road users (road space allocation) is required to ensure consistent and transparent decisions about funding and delivery priorities. • Improve safety through best-practice approaches by aligning with key NSW Government policies and strategies.

Importance of draft initiatives

Survey respondents were provided a list of draft initiatives that aligned to safety and were asked to select up to three that were most important to them. The top five initiatives selected are listed below.

	Safety – top five draft initiatives
1	Improve safety at rail stations and on public transport to address passenger behaviours and safety at community car parks
2	M1 Pacific Motorway intersection upgrades between Raymond Terrace and Karuah including Medowie Road, The Bucketts Way and Italia Road
3	Upgrade key intersections in Lake Macquarie LGA, including Hillsborough Road, Speers Point roundabout and Main Road, Dora Creek, to improve safety and congestion
4	Implement opportunities for park and ride, car-pooling and car sharing services at key transport interchanges, including improved safety and access measures
5	Support implementation of tourism infrastructure and services including converting non-operational railways into rail trails and providing safe cycling connections to these rail trails from nearby towns

How the Plan reflects this feedback

The Plan demonstrates a strong commitment to improving safety across the transport network, with a range of targeted initiatives aimed at reducing fatal and serious injuries, enhancing safety for vulnerable road users, and improving perceptions of safety for public transport passengers.

The Plan recognises that Transport is committed to achieving zero trauma on the road network by 2050 and zero trauma on waterways by 2056. This is in line with the internationally recognised Safe Systems approach to transport safety. The Plan details that the Hunter region has experienced high rates of fatal and serious injury crashes, with speeding and drug use being the top contributing factors. Addressing safety for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and motorcyclists is a key priority. This includes initiatives to improve safety on rural and regional roads, upgrade intersections to improve safety for vulnerable road users, partnering with Councils and the NSW Police Force to deliver road safety and speed management programs, and carrying out speed zone reviews to improve conditions for walking and cycling.

The Plan outlines initiatives to target high-risk crash locations, implement consistent safety treatments across the regional road network, and reduce speed limits on local and rural roads. Improving safety and perceptions of safety for public transport passengers is also a focus, with measures such as better lighting, surveillance, and amenities at stations and stops. Waterway safety will also be addressed through initiatives in the Maritime Safety Plan 2026 to reduce fatalities and serious injuries.

The Plan has responded to concerns around safety on public transport and recognises the need to improve safety and perceived safety on public transport, particularly for women, girls and gender diverse people.

We've updated the Plan to reflect what the community told us about safety and added or revised initiatives based on feedback.

Key updates in the Plan:

- updated safety data to reflect the most recent five-year finalised crash data (2019 to 2023) including text, maps and infographics
- included a reference to the Greta fatal bus crash as a significant event in the Hunter reflected in the updated crash data
- additional narrative on the value of safe speed limits to improve road safety, enhance liveability and reduced the environmental impact of road traffic; includes an example location for Darby Street in Newcastle
- enhanced commentary on safety and accessibility, including real and perceived personal safety with reference and data from the Safer Cities Survey and streets and Shared Spaces Program
- insights from the Safer Cities Survey were visualised in an infographic to quantify perceptions of personal safety and how this influences travel choice
- additional content on the Safe Accessible Transport (SAT) Program that aims to improve public safety and increase accessibility for passengers.

Key updates to initiatives:

- revised initiatives to focus more broadly on providing safety and efficient cross-connectivity of key corridors
- new initiative to deliver outcomes from the Safe Accessible Transport Program
- revised initiative language to provide a more comprehensive approach to addressing safety issues on high-speed regional roads and alignment with transport needs to support housing growth and community resilience

- additional intersection upgrades to address safety issues
- additional initiative to deliver road safety programs in partnership with Councils and the NSW Police to reduce road trauma
- additional initiative to undertake speed zone reviews and apply safer speed zone settings
- additional initiative to address safety issues at existing at-grade rail level crossings
- additional initiative to improve the perception of safety and people, walking, cycling and using public transport, particularly for women, girls and gender diverse people.



7.1.3 Public transport and connectivity

Improving public transport infrastructure and services, including bus, ferry, and rail, is a major priority for communities across the Hunter. Connecting to key hubs, destinations, employment and health services is seen as vital for the well-being and growth of the region.

Improving the reach, frequency and reliability of the public transport network across the Hunter region emerged as a prominent theme to help reduce the reliance on private vehicles. Many comments highlighted the need for a review of bus services, advocacy to reopen rail corridors and calls for more services during peak hours and weekends.

Recommendations focused on better integration of different modes and enhancing connectivity to key destinations like Newcastle Airport, the University of Newcastle, Broadmeadow Precinct and the Hunter Valley wine region.

Comments also highlighted opportunities to improve the amenity, functionality and accessibility of key transport hubs and interchanges, including upgrades and incorporating digital information systems to create more welcoming and secure environments for passengers.

There was significant support to further develop light rail and ferry services, as well as high speed rail to enhance connectivity and reduce reliance on private vehicles.

Similarly to issues raised for safety, there are concerns about the accessibility and safety of public transport, particularly for vulnerable users with suggestions for improved infrastructure for active transport connections, to support disabled passengers as well as better connectivity between residential areas and transport hubs.



276

Survey respondents provided feedback on initiatives



140

Survey respondents provided other suggestions and comments



27

Submission responses raised public transport



Figure 10. Commuters waiting for light rail at Queens Wharf stop.

Summary of feedback received

Item raised	Summary of feedback
Infrastructure	• There was support for the extension of light rail to help improve connectivity to essential services and entertainment precincts. • We heard calls for rail network expansion or restoration of passenger rail lines to improve connection between residents, employment and key destinations, notably Newcastle Airport. • There were calls for new rail stations or increase of platform capacity in high growth areas or near key services to improve accessibility and enhance operational flexibility. • There was support for high-speed rail development. • There were suggestions for rapid buses or dedicated bus routes between key hubs and services. • The community expressed a need for improved infrastructure to allow multi modal connections to active transport. • Improving bus infrastructure, such as shelters and seating.
Connectivity, frequency and reliability	• We heard there was a strong demand for more frequent, accessible and efficient bus services, including more connections to growing areas and major centres including express routes between suburban centres and Newcastle CBD. • There were requests for more frequent services to key destinations, major centres and employment hubs such as the airport, hospitals, university and vineyards. • Frequent and reliable train services, particularly between Newcastle, the Central Coast and Sydney, were seen as a priority. • There were calls for more train services during peak hour, express train services on weekends, and more Hunter Line services. • There was feedback for improved services outside of the region, such as Port Macquarie and Tamworth. • There was support to extend ferry services and increase frequency of evening services.
Integration	• There was a strong demand for better integration and upgrades between different modes of transport, such as buses, trains and cycling infrastructure. • Better coordination of services to align with timing of Sydney-bound trains, which was a key frustration for many commuters, as well as requests to improve coordination of buses to align with flights. • There were suggestions for creation of 'mini transport hubs' at strategic locations to integrate different bus services and enhance experience through features like shelters, seating, and lighting. • Requests for ticket integration across modes.

Accessibility	• We heard public transport is often significantly less competitive in comparison to driving, particularly where there is ample parking, with recommendations to provide more affordable fares. • The community expressed the importance of ensuring public transport is accessible and equitable for all users, including people with disabilities, low-income households, and regional communities. • There were requests to improve timetabling and real time information and wayfinding. • We heard on-demand services could help address needs of more vulnerable community members and improve liveability of regional communities. • There were calls to integrate public transport into new developments with recommendations for stronger coordination between Transport and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to ensure housing is constructed in locations that support public transport usage.
Future planning	• Suggestions to investigate the use of the Lower Hunter Freight Bypass for passenger rail to connect future residential growth areas.

Importance of draft initiatives

Survey respondents were provided a list of draft initiatives that aligned to public transport and were asked to select up to five that were most important to them. The top five initiatives selected are listed below.

	Public transport – top five draft initiatives
1	Implement a strategy to increase passenger rail services along the Hunter Rail Line that aligns with land release areas and includes station upgrades, investigating electrification and additional services
2	Work with the High Speed Rail Authority to plan for future High Speed Rail between Sydney and Newcastle
3	Review and implement bus service improvements across the Hunter in the next five years to provide better access to employment, healthcare, education, commercial, retail, leisure, tourism and connectivity to other transport modes
4	Improve public transport services to better connect the Hunter with Newcastle Airport, particularly from Newcastle, Port Stephens, Forster and Taree
5	Preserve transit corridors from Newcastle Interchange to Broadmeadow

How the Plan reflects this feedback

The Plan recognises the need to enhance the reach, frequency, reliability and integration of the public transport network across the Hunter region.

To address calls for improved rail and light rail services, the Hunter Plan outlines several initiatives, including developing a Hunter Rail Strategy, improving services and capacity along the Hunter Line, exploring new stations in growth areas, and investigating the potential for electrification. The Hunter Plan also identifies the future potential of the Newcastle Light Rail network by preserving the transit corridor between Newcastle Interchange and Broadmeadow to better connect strategic destinations.

The Plan commits to reviewing and implementing bus service improvements across the Hunter, including more frequent and direct services linking strategic centres, major employment hubs, health and education facilities, as well as enhancing connections to regional areas. The Plan emphasises the need for better integration between different transport modes, proposing initiatives such as developing multimodal 'mini transport hubs' and improving coordination of bus services to Newcastle Airport.

Recognising the importance of seamless integration between transport modes, the Plan outlines a suite of initiatives to improve interchanges, wayfinding and ticketing. This includes developing transport hubs at strategic locations and ensuring new developments are designed to support multimodal connectivity.

Underpinning these service and infrastructure improvements is a strong focus on accessibility and equity and includes developing Local Aboriginal Transport and Services Plans as well as expanding the provision of day return public transport services to connect smaller, more remote towns.

We've updated the Plan to reflect what the community told us about public transport and added or revised initiatives based on feedback.

Key updates in the Plan:

- revised map of the Hunter public transport network to visualise the frequency of services at rail stations as well as bus trip frequency to improve reader experience and clarify the extent of the current network in terms of service provision
- additional content on the Safe Accessible Transport (SAT) Program that aims to improve public safety and increase accessibility for passengers
- clarification on the bus service contract areas for the Hunter.

Key updates to initiatives:

- revision of initiatives to demonstrate bus service improvement alignment with the Medium Term Bus Plan and clarify the geographical coverage of service improvements to include additional LGAs; additional detail included to specify target service frequencies and route expansions, particularly for longer-distance and local connections
- enhanced language to commit to the development of a Hunter Rail Strategy initiative including new options for expanded service and ensure alignment with larger rail considerations
- revised initiative language to include additional detail on station upgrade works to support proposed growth at Morisset
- consolidated language to broaden the scope of an initiative to review ferry operations and infrastructure
- updated wording to reflect a more concise and broad-reaching initiative to improve public transport connections to Newcastle Airport, while still addressing the need to accommodate customers with luggage
- revised initiative wording to include the addition of investigating new ferry services in the long-term.



7.1.4 Active transport (walking and cycling)

Increasing active transport options is a priority and is seen as an enabler to promoting the tourism economy, reducing emissions and promoting healthy lifestyle.

Feedback focused on dedicated cycling networks, shared pathways, and pedestrian connectivity. This is seen as crucial to support sustainability, tourism, and community wellbeing with Shiraz to Shore Trail and the Richmond Vale Rail Trail highlighted as key projects.

Alongside comments relating to public transport and road upgrades, feedback called out the need for improved active transport infrastructure and connectivity to ensure needs of pedestrians and cyclists are catered and help address missing links in the network.

We heard there was a strong demand for improved cycleway infrastructure, with a focus on safety and separation from road traffic.

Many respondents further emphasised the need for better connectivity and accessibility of cycleways and footpaths to key locations such as schools, shops and public transport hubs, with calls for secure bike storage facilities.

There were calls for increased funding and strategic planning to support active transport initiatives, with suggestions to reallocate budget from road infrastructure to active transport projects.



137

Survey respondents provided feedback on initiatives



41

Survey respondents provided other suggestions and comments



7

Submission responses raised active transport



Figure 11. People using the shared path on Fernleigh Track in Newcastle, 2024.

Summary of feedback received

Item raised	Summary of feedback
Connectivity and infrastructure	- Feedback highlighted need for continuous, connected cycle networks, noting missing links and abrupt ends to existing lanes can make routes difficult to navigate and dangerous. - Concerns raised about poorly maintained cycleways. - Many highlighted the benefits of recreational and commuter cycling, most notably the Shiraz to Shore cycle route. - We heard there was a lack of accessible footpaths and connectivity, particularly in suburban and rural areas, with suggestions to widen paths, and improve maintenance to increase use. - There were requests to ensure there was pedestrian-friendly infrastructure in all new developments.
Integration with public transport	- There were calls for secure bike storage at train stations and bus stops. - Requests for improved access to public transport for those traveling with a bike or walking including integrating existing pathways with public transport services.
Road safety and road user space allocation	- Responses discussed the importance of dedicated bike lanes that are physically separated from other vehicles, particularly along corridors connecting to major destinations rather than painted lanes which were viewed as unsafe. - There were suggestions to lower residential speed limits install traffic calming measures or refuges, and more street lighting to enhance safety. - Intersections and crossings were seen as problematic areas for pedestrians and cyclists, with suggestions for upgrades to improve safety and connectivity. - Concerns raised about the lack of pedestrian access and footpaths along busy main roads and parked cars blocking bike lanes, making it challenging for those with prams, disabilities, or cycling to travel safely. - Suggestions were provided for better road designs to accommodate all road users, which could help transform environments into more walkable, community-oriented main streets. - Calls for a clear transport hierarchy that prioritises active transport, followed by public transport, over private vehicle use and stronger reference of alignment with NSW Government policies and strategies related to active transport.
Future planning	- There were suggestions to look at benefits of and potential to repurpose rail trails for active transport connections. - Calls for future road upgrades to include provisions for cycling connectivity, not just focus on vehicle capacity. - Emphasis on importance of investing in comprehensive, connected, and safe active transport infrastructure to encourage walking, cycling, and reduce car dependency.

Importance of draft initiatives

Survey respondents were provided a list of draft initiatives that aligned to active transport and were asked to select up to three that were most important to them. The top five initiatives selected are listed below.

	Active transport – top five draft initiatives
1	Implement cycle networks that connect to train stations, employment centres and schools, including end of trip facilities and secure cycle parking
2	Support implementation of tourism infrastructure and services including converting non-operational railways into rail trails and providing safe cycling connections to these rail trails from nearby towns
3	Preserve opportunities for the re-use of mining infrastructure including the rail corridor between Maitland and Cessnock and the Western Lake Macquarie Coal Haulage Road
4	Identify opportunities for cross connectivity to rail stations to reduce journey paths for pedestrians and cyclists in North West Lake Macquarie and East Maitland
5	Upgrades to Newcastle Link Road to provide safe and efficient connectivity between Wallsend and the M1 Pacific Motorway

How the Plan reflects this feedback

The Plan recognises the importance of investing in active transport infrastructure to support sustainability, the visitor economy, and community wellbeing. There is an emphasis on the need for comprehensive, connected, and safe active transport infrastructure to encourage walking, cycling, and reduce car dependency, particularly in growing areas.

Key initiatives include the delivery of dedicated cycling networks, shared pathways, and improved pedestrian connectivity across the region. Projects like the Shiraz to Shore Trail including the Richmond Vale Rail Trail are identified as priorities that will enhance active transport connectivity and promote recreational and commuter cycling.

The Plan also addresses the need for improved safety and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. Initiatives focus on addressing missing links in the cycling network, providing separated infrastructure, and ensuring road upgrades cater to the needs of active transport users, including better lighting, wider paths, and lower speed limits in residential areas. The Plan also proposes upgrades to intersections and crossings to improve safety and connectivity for active transport users.

Feedback on the importance of connecting active transport networks to key destinations such as schools, shops, and public transport hubs is also reflected in the Plan's initiatives.

We've updated the Plan to reflect what the community told us about active transport and added or revised initiatives based on community feedback.

Key updates in the Plan:

- clarification on improving active transport choices in centres with reference to the Strategic Cycleway Corridor Program
- a new map illustrating the mapped strategic cycleway network for Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle

- reference to walking and cycling transport guidelines used in development of this Plan, are now reflected in the introductory tables
- additional alignment to key transport strategies for walking and cycling.

Key updates to initiatives:

- included expansion of the cycling network to connect neighbouring communities, as part of Morisset precinct improvements
- recognised that road upgrades can improve conditions for walking and cycling.



7.1.5 Freight

The Hunter region will play an increasingly important role for freight movement across the State and beyond.

Enhancing the efficiency and capacity of the freight network is a key focus, particularly through initiatives like the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor. There are calls to address pinch points, integrate with national freight strategies, and leverage the region's mining and agricultural industries.

Accommodating the increasing movements of oversize overmass (OSOM) vehicles, particularly those associated with the growing renewable energy sector and mining industry and the connections to and from the Port of Newcastle was a priority.

Respondents also emphasise the need for upgrade to the road network, improvements to rest stops, addressing first/last-mile logistics issues, investigation into the emerging technologies to help optimise supply chains and support the freight industry.



40

Survey respondents provided feedback on initiatives



16

Survey respondents provided other suggestions and comments



7

Submission responses raised freight

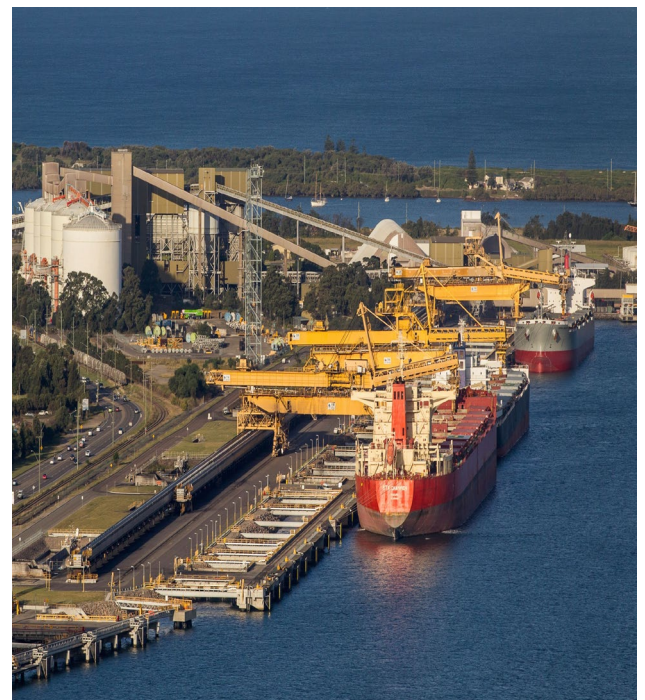


Figure 12. Aerial view of coal freight ships at Kooragang Island berth.

Summary of feedback received

Item raised	Summary of feedback
Road infrastructure improvement	• Strong emphasis on improving and expanding roads, especially regional roads, to enhance transport access and safety. • Discussion on addressing traffic congestion through better planning and infrastructure, such as grade-separated interchanges and continuous dual-lane carriageways. • Suggestions included the need for more rest areas for trucks to ensure mandatory rest breaks and improve safety for truck drivers. • Need to upgrade strategic freight routes and intersections to accommodate the movement of oversize overmass (OSOM) vehicles, and therefore support renewable energy sector and mining industry. • Need for alternative fuel infrastructure along key freight corridors in regional NSW.
Rail infrastructure	• Calls to increase capacity and improve rail connections to support more freight movement as it provides an opportunity to ease congestion, enhance supply chain productivity, and minimise carbon emissions. • Suggestions to upgrade key freight corridors like the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor.
Freight strategy and coordination	• Freight efficiency and connectivity emerged as a key priority. • Better integration with freight planning with national strategies to ensure regulatory consistency. • Need to shift freight movement from roads to rail to reduce truck volumes and traffic congestion. • Need to address first/last-mile logistics issues. • Utilise technology to improve access to real-time data to optimise supply chains. • Calls for dedicated freight advisory panels comprising government and industry stakeholders to guide the implementation of freight-specific strategies.

Importance of draft initiatives

Survey respondents were provided a list of draft initiatives that aligned to freight and were asked to select up to three that were most important to them. The top five initiatives selected are listed below.

	Freight – top five draft initiatives
1	Start upgrades to Industrial Drive to facilitate over size over mass trips from Newcastle Port, including those associated with renewable energy zones
2	Work with local governments to address pinch points on the transport network to improve movement of agricultural goods and services
3	Identify and implement additional opportunities for heavy vehicle rest stops, compliance and decoupling facilities to support the safe and efficient movement of heavy vehicle and over size over mass vehicles across the network
4	Complete consolidated freight study to inform planning for the future freight network
5	Investigate options to upgrade Nelson Bay Road corridor between Fern Bay and Williamtown, inclusive of cross connectivity of surrounding residential communities

How the Plan reflects this feedback

The Plan addresses key freight challenges focusing on improving road and rail infrastructure, enhancing freight efficiency and connectivity, and supporting the growing demand for freight movements.

The Plan identifies several initiatives to upgrade key freight corridors and intersections to accommodate oversize overmass movements, address congestion, and improve safety including improvements to the M1 Pacific Motorway, Golden Highway, New England Highway and MR195 (Main Road/Cessnock Road). The Plan also highlights the need to as well as highlighting the need for additional heavy vehicle rest areas across the region to support the freight industry and improve safety for truck drivers (Initiative 33 and 44).

In terms of rail infrastructure, the Plan emphasises the importance of the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor, and also suggests exploring opportunities to diversify the range of freight transported by rail, beyond the current dominance of coal, to support the region's economic transition.

The Plan recognises the need to better integrate freight planning with national strategies and utilise technology to optimise supply chains. It commits to undertaking a consolidated freight study to inform future planning and decision-making around the region's freight network and connectivity. The Plan also highlights the importance of addressing first and last-mile logistics issues to improve the overall efficiency of the freight system.

We've updated the Plan to reflect what the community told us about freight and added or revised initiatives based on community feedback.

Key updates in the Plan:

- additional content on the Regional Network East/West Uplift (RNEW) program and increasing capacity of the rail network for moving freight
- changed Higher Productivity Vehicle to High Productivity Vehicle throughout the document to reflect terminology recognised and used by industry and freight partners

- clarified the freight forecast insights using the Transport Strategic Freight Model through content and explaining movement types
- highlighted the importance of the role of the Hunter Valley Coal Network for rail access to the Port of Newcastle
- clarified Port of Newcastle's freight diversification strategy
- emphasised the opportunity for freight to contribute to Net Zero goals, through the adoption of the NSW Towards Net Zero Freight Emissions Policy.

Key updates to initiatives:

- additional initiative to support increased uptake of low-emissions freight vehicles in partnership with freight companies
- revised initiative language on delivering the Lower Hunter Freight corridor.



7.1.6 Resilience

The Hunter region has experienced several natural disaster events in recent years including bushfires, flooding, and storms. These events have social, economic, and environmental costs, which put significant pressure on the transport network and can cause short to long term travel disruptions. The impact of these events on the community continues long after they have occurred.

Following recent adverse weather impacts, feedback showed a strong desire to improve network resilience as well as strengthening the reliability and durability of transport infrastructure, particularly to help prepare for and address challenges posed by extreme weather events.

There were calls for resilience funding to maintain and upgrade critical infrastructure as well as provide financial relief to councils and local communities during disaster events, in order to bolster preparedness and response capabilities.

Overall, the feedback focused on the importance of enhancing the resilience of both transport networks and emergency services infrastructure to better respond, withstand and recover from the impacts of natural disasters and other disruptions.



41

Survey respondents provided feedback on initiatives



4

Survey respondents provided other suggestions and comments



Figure 13. Aerial shot of Cessnock Road at Testers Hollow.

Summary of feedback received

Item raised	Summary of feedback
Network infrastructure improvements and maintenance	• Safety of transportation options and access during emergencies is a priority with resilience of the road network seen as vital to reduce risk of isolation. • Need for better road maintenance and improved road connections to accommodate growing populations and ensure safety and ongoing access to key services in flood and bushfire-prone areas. • There was a strong emphasis on improving resilience of the rail network due to recent adverse weather impacts, and that high-speed rail could support the network and evacuations. • We heard rail corridors that carry both passenger and freight services would compromise capacity, with calls for dual passenger and freight lines to provide increased resilience to the network. • Need for long-term infrastructure planning to prevent bottlenecks during evacuation, particularly in high-growth areas. • Regional councils raised issues with backlog of maintenance and upgrades needed for ageing infrastructure to support resilience.
Emergency response, communication and technology	• Consistent communication on the status of network disruptions and real time travel information during major events and natural disasters. • Calls for airports to be recognised as regional airports to support emergency services. • Evacuation routes need to be identified for select remote areas.
Funding and responsibility	• Road reclassification will help deliver more reliable roads as frequent failures and closures have impacted community connectivity and activities. • Securing Section 44 disaster relief payments is crucial to strengthen councils' preparedness and response capabilities.
Connecting to Country	• Incorporating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into natural disaster planning, which can help increase the resilience of local communities.

Importance of draft initiatives

Survey respondents were provided a list of draft initiatives that aligned to resilience and were asked to select up to three that were most important to them. The top five initiatives selected are listed below.

	Resilience – top five draft initiatives
1	Work with the High Speed Rail Authority to plan for future High Speed Rail between Sydney and Newcastle
2	Start delivery of the Lower Hunter Freight corridor to allow for increased passenger trips on the Central Coast / Newcastle and Hunter rail lines as well as increased freight access to and from the Newcastle Port
3	Consistent communication on the status of network disruptions and real time travel information during major events and natural disasters
4	Replacement of timber bridges to increase resilience and improve agriculture
5	Work with local governments to address pinch points on the transport network to improve movement of agricultural goods and services
	Real time travel information across the state

How the Plan reflects this feedback

Resilient networks is an objective of the Plan, demonstrating commitment to build a transport network in the Hunter that can withstand and effectively respond to the increasing challenges posed by natural disasters and severe weather events.

The Plan recognises these events can significantly disrupt the transport network and impact travel, restricting access to critical services, as well as interrupt supply chains and connections to key hubs.

The Plan identifies initiatives to identify and treat vulnerabilities and risks across the network including replacement of ageing timber bridges, improve real-time journey information and minimise public transport service disruptions, helping customers make informed decisions during times of network disruption.

The Plan aims to embed climate and hazard resilience into the design and construction of new transport infrastructure to ensure new assets are built to withstand future shocks and stresses and developing adaptive management strategies to maintain emergency access and quickly restore services following disruptions. The Plan also highlights the need to better align network expansion with population and economic growth, to ensure the transport system can effectively support the region as it develops.

We’ve updated the Plan to reflect what the community told us about resilience and added or revised initiatives based on community feedback.

Key updates in the Plan:

- additional content on the Regional Network East/West Uplift (RNEW) program that will enhance east-west rail links and improve resilience of the freight rail network.

Key updates to initiatives:

- enhanced initiative wording to address community resilience challenges for Forster-Tuncurry
- strengthened the importance of a state-wide requirement to communicate network disruptions and provide journey information related to network disruptions
- additional initiative to look at opportunities for Aboriginal organisations to access, manage and use culturally significant lands allowing for example cultural burns improving resilience
- additional initiative to address safety concerns at at-grade rail level crossings improving network resilience
- clarified language for replacement of non-heritage listed timber bridges to improve road network resilience.



7.1.7 Land use/housing and successful places

The Hunter region is expected to continue to grow, and sustainable transport planning is essential to provide well-located housing and employment. This helps to ensure the required infrastructure, public transport and active transport options are in place to adapt to meet the demands of new developments and ensure these areas are accessible and connected.

Many submissions noted the importance of aligning transport planning with housing and land use strategies, to ensure new developments are well-connected and supported by appropriate transport infrastructure with strong support to prioritise Transport Oriented Developments (TOD).

There was a strong demand for improved active and public transport services, including the reinstatement of rail services and the introduction of new light rail routes.

There were also comments highlighting the need for better road maintenance and infrastructure to accommodate growing populations, with community feedback calling on developers to take more responsibility for the impact of their projects on local transport infrastructure.

Several comments emphasised the importance of integrating new developments with existing transport networks to improve connectivity and reduce congestion.

Environmental conservation and the preservation of public transport corridors were considered crucial for sustainable urban development.



87

Survey respondents provided feedback on initiatives



25

Survey respondents provided other suggestions and comments



9

Submission responses raised land use planning



Figure 34. Field workers during construction of M1 Raymond Terrace extension.

Summary of feedback received

Item raised	Summary of feedback
Transport infrastructure and connectivity	- Feedback included calls to reinstate passenger lines to assist with connectivity of growing areas, as well as new train stations near key growth areas. - Bus service improvements are needed to support population growth and provide new connections to underserved areas, with suggestions for on-demand buses to solve first-mile/last-mile challenges. - Improved public transport corridors and cycling/walking infrastructure seen as vital for long-term connectivity. - Feedback highlighted need for upgrades to major road corridors and intersections to address congestion and support growth. - Calls for improved road access to new developments, long-term infrastructure planning to prevent bottlenecks and improve safety, particularly in high-growth areas. - Concerns were raised about inadequate planning, poor maintenance and lack of investment to cater for population growth and address existing transport issues.
Land use planning	- Support was shown for prioritisation of Transport Oriented Developments (TOD), with implementation of multimodal transport options to realise precinct potential. - Discussion surrounding developer responsibility and accountability for increased demand on infrastructure and services. - There were calls to prevent the subdivision of industrial land that could impact freight and logistics activities. - Need for coordinated place-based planning approach to support housing and employment growth. - Emphasis on importance of Transport working closely with DPHI to achieve positive community outcomes. - Growth projections need to be updated to latest figures to remove risk of underestimation of transport demand. - Calls for timelines and specific details on how transport needs in growth areas will be addressed.
Housing and employment connectivity	- The priority needs to be for homes and jobs with equal access for all. - Calls for higher-density, mixed-use developments, instead of urban sprawl, with better integration of transport, shops and green spaces. - Support for more government housing near public transport. - Low and mid-rise housing reforms announced could be relevant for investment opportunities to improve connections between centres.
Preservation	- Calls for preservation of bushland and highlighting importance of environmental conservation. - Preservation of future transport corridors were considered crucial for sustainable urban development.

Importance of draft initiatives

Survey respondents were provided a list of draft initiatives that aligned to land use and were asked to select up to three that were most important to them. The top five initiatives selected are listed below.

	Land use planning – top five draft initiatives
1	Implement a strategy to increase passenger rail services along the Hunter Rail Line that aligns with land release areas and includes station upgrades, investigating electrification and additional services
2	Review and implement bus service improvements across the Hunter in the next five years to provide better access to employment, healthcare, education, commercial, retail, leisure, tourism and connectivity to other transport modes
3	Continue to deliver improved bus services in the longer term to connect to Newcastle Airport and improve key longer-distance connections across the Hunter region
4	Continue to improve train services in the longer-term including services to support growth and expanding services to deliver day return trips between Tamworth and Newcastle
5	Implement opportunities for park and ride, car-pooling and car sharing services at key transport interchanges, including improved safety and access measures

How the Plan reflects this feedback

The Plan identifies the need to support the delivery of housing with its objective *Well-located housing and successful places* through sustainable transport options to address growth in the Hunter region.

To accommodate this growth, the Plan highlights the importance of focusing development around existing transport infrastructure, in line with the Transport Oriented Development (TOD) program and the low and mid-rise housing policy for the Greater Newcastle Area.

In response to regionally significant growth areas identified by DPHI, the Plan outlines several initiatives to support the delivery of housing and successful places. This includes upgrading the Newcastle Link Road and Minmi Road intersection, start of multimodal upgrades to the MR195 (Main Road/Cessnock Road) and surrounding road network, and planning for service and infrastructure upgrades around the Morisset town centre. This is alongside preservation of the transit corridor between Newcastle Interchange and Broadmeadow and development of a package of multimodal transport and service upgrades to facilitate housing, employment, and the event centre in the Broadmeadow Catalyst area.

We’ve updated the Plan to reflect what the community told us about land use and added or revised initiatives based on community feedback.

Key updates in the Plan:

- additional detail on the land use policies referenced, such as the Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy with a map of indicative locations
- refined content to align with DPHI housing and planning reforms
- updated projected population figures.

Key updates to initiatives:

- updated initiatives to align transport improvements to support housing growth, employment and community resilience
- broadened initiative to provide safe and efficient cross-connectivity, facilitate housing growth and improving active and public transport between Belmont and Charlestown and Wallsend to Broadmeadow corridors.



7.1.8 Environment

Transport has a role in implementing NSW Government carbon emissions reduction policies to help achieve net zero targets and reduce the transport sector’s impact on climate change. This includes improvements to transport infrastructure to enable sustainable travel choices, such as ensuring active and public transport connections as an alternative option to private cars, charging bays to support electric vehicle ownership, and promoting low emissions freight and buses.

There was a strong emphasis on increasing active and public transport to reduce car dependency.

Several respondents emphasised the need to prioritise transport initiatives that support the transition to net zero emissions, such as the electrification of the rail network, expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and greater mode shift from private vehicles to public and active transport.

Submissions also called for transport planning to better consider embodied carbon, biodiversity impacts, and climate resilience, aligning with broader state and regional sustainability objectives.

Overall, those that provided feedback were supportive of net zero initiatives. There was an emphasis for the need of a stronger focus on reducing transport emissions through policies, plans, and initiatives that promote modal shift, active transport, and the transition to zero-emission vehicles in the Hunter region.



75

Survey respondents provided feedback on initiatives



21

Survey respondents provided other suggestions and comments



4

Submission responses raised environment



Figure 4. Windmill blade at Hexham, travelling to Rye Park.

Summary of feedback received

Item raised	Summary of feedback
Public and active transport enhancements	- There was a strong emphasis on increasing active transportation, such as cycling and walking, and need for improved infrastructure to realise this as a viable option and reduce car dependency. - Discussion that creating safe neighbourhoods, including reduced speed limits, would support and encourage walking and cycling as sustainable transport options. - There were suggestions to electrify train lines. - A focus on improving public transport through more efficient and connected services and improvements to infrastructure, was seen as crucial to encourage use and help reduce emissions and traffic congestion.
Freight	- There was a focus on prioritising initiatives that move towards decarbonisation of the freight industry with calls to shift more freight to rail to reduce emissions and suggestions to trial small electric vehicles and freight consolidation for last-mile deliveries. - There were calls to integrate with national and state sustainability targets and implementation plans. - Feedback highlighted the importance of freight, infrastructure and connections required for Renewable Energy Zones.
Electric vehicle uptake and infrastructure	- There was demand to prioritise expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. - Suggestions to transition the bus and train fleets to zero-emission technologies. - Feedback suggested inclusion of mode shift targets away from private cars and promotion towards active and public transport to achieve net-zero emissions goals.
Renewable energy and emerging technologies	- Hunter hydrogen hub could contribute to the net zero target. - There are opportunities to trial bioenergy produced through regional resources to fuel electric buses.
Urban planning and development	- Concerns raised about urban sprawl and impact on the environment and community. - Suggestions for higher density living and better planning to reduce reliance on cars and improve access to public transport. - Aligning with broader state and regional sustainability objectives.
Environmental protection	- Calls to apply a 'no net loss of biodiversity' for future infrastructure projects, including measures such as wildlife crossings. - Increase of green spaces in urban areas. - Focus ding to be on sustainable development that supports ecosystem health.

Importance of draft initiatives

Survey respondents were provided a list of draft initiatives that aligned to environment and were asked to select up to three that were most important to them. The top five initiatives selected are listed below.

	Environment - top five draft initiatives
1	Implement cycle networks that connect to train stations, employment centres and schools, including end of trip facilities and secure cycle parking
2	Implement a strategy to increase passenger rail services along the Hunter Rail Line that aligns with land release areas and includes station upgrades, investigating electrification and additional services
3	Transition of NSW Bus Fleet to 100 per cent zero emission buses
4	Increase the number of electric vehicle charging stations in regional NSW
5	Apply the Road User Space Allocation policy to the Pacific Highway between Belmont and Charlestown to increase priority for buses and active transport

How the Plan reflects this feedback

The Plan demonstrates a strong commitment to achieving net zero emissions, which is a critical objective to contribute to the NSW Government's target of net zero emissions by 2050.

To meet this objective, the Plan sets out initiatives help accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) across the region, including through the rollout of a strategic regional EV charging network.

Decarbonisation of the freight sector, which is a significant contributor to emissions in the Hunter region is also a key focus supporting the freight industry's shift to low and zero emission technologies. This includes planning for infrastructure to support battery electric and hydrogen-powered heavy vehicles. as well as increasing the mode share of freight rail, which can provide a more sustainable alternative to road transport (section 5.7.1).

More broadly, the Plan seeks to integrate renewable energy infrastructure into the transport network, which includes ensuring reliable heavy vehicle access to support the construction and maintenance of these facilities. Importantly, the Plan also commits to ensuring any new transport infrastructure does not negatively impact biodiversity, reinforcing the need for a holistic approach to sustainability.

We've updated the Plan to reflect what the community told us about environment and added or revised initiatives based on what we heard.

Key updates in the Plan:

- additional content on low and zero emission technologies for freight
- added reference to NSW Towards Net Zero Freight Emissions Policy
- additional content on the need for Transport to consider decarbonisation beyond electric vehicles and reference to new policies
- reference to Biodiversity policy and call out on the Net Zero and Circular Economy Guidelines

- included additional long-term outcomes to target no net loss of biodiversity as a consequent of Transport's infrastructure development activities
- enhanced the indicators for the net zero emissions objective by including a metric for stabilises traffic volumes in urban areas and regional centres.

Key updates to initiatives:

- additional initiative to support increased uptake of low-emissions freight vehicles in partnership with freight companies.



7.1.9 Economy

Transport as a major contributor to building and accessing employment across the region and a key factor in tourism opportunities being realised. With the global gateway containing the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport, movement of freight and visitor connection is key for the region’s economy.

We heard there were several challenges limiting the region’s ability to support the growth of the local tourism industry. A key issue is the lack of efficient, accessible and direct public transport connections between Newcastle Airport, major hubs and other key tourist areas with calls to accelerate delivery of high-frequency shuttle services and express buses to address this barrier to growing tourism. Developing an integrated regional tourism network was also identified as an important priority to drive visitation and economic growth.

Feedback included strong support for improved transport infrastructure and services to support economic growth and community well-being.

Prioritising safe and accessible transport options, including cycling and public transport, was viewed as essential for achieving the goals of the draft initiatives. Feedback discussed that addressing these concerns will likely enhance community participation and contribute to a thriving economy.



35

Survey respondents provided feedback on initiatives



9

Survey respondents provided other suggestions and comments

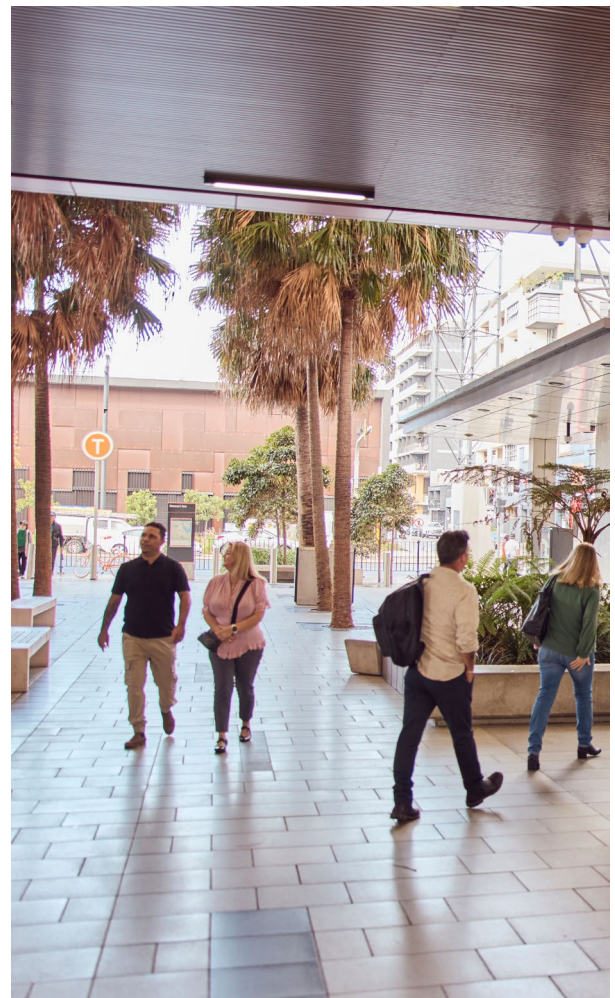


Figure 5. Passengers at Newcastle Interchange.

Summary of feedback received

Item raised	Summary of feedback
Active transport	• Cycle tourism is seen as an important part of the regional economy, which requires more investment. • There was encouragement to include active travel links within the A2B corridor, supporting both commuter traffic and the visitor economy. • Support for initiatives to provide active transport links to the tourist precincts in the vineyards, notably Shiraz to Shore cycleway including the Richmond Vale Rail Trail.
Public transport	• Feedback highlighted transport connectivity and accessibility are major issues that are undermining the region's ability to capitalise on and grow the tourism growth, notably lack of direct, efficient public transport to and from Newcastle Airport. • Workforce mobility is limited, particularly for young hospitality workers who rely on public transport and create a barrier for employment access. • There were opposing thoughts on high-speed rail in relation to economy of the region with support to help boost the visitor economy, while others concerned it could detract from the economy by enabling people to travel further. • There was discussion around opportunities to improve bus services to tourist destinations and affordable fares to encourage public transport use. • We heard long distance, tourist, and charter services could help drive growth in regional tourism by enhancing accessibility for visitors and providing essential connections to key destinations. • There were calls for digital trip-planning tools that can integrate with real-time public transport information, alongside visitor-friendly transport hubs with improvements to amenities and signage.
Strategic alignment	• Calls for greater alignment with other State strategies. • Need for a clear strategy to better link tourism destinations across the region. • Clearer commitments, timelines, and visitor-specific strategies to address the key transport issues facing the region's tourism industry are required. • The Draft Plan does not align with the latest growth projections, risking underestimation of transport demand.
Freight and aviation	• The increased number of OSOM movements from the Port of Newcastle to REZs will need coordinate. • Other airports across the region could help support growth in freight and tourism. • Poor regional road conditions cause delays and increase operational costs for freight operators.

Importance of draft initiatives

Survey respondents were provided a list of draft initiatives that aligned to economy and were asked to select up to three that were most important to them. The top five initiatives selected are listed below.

	Economy – top five draft initiatives
1	Improve public transport services to better connect the Hunter with Newcastle Airport, particularly from Newcastle, Port Stephens, Forster and Taree
2	Work with the High Speed Rail Authority to plan for future High Speed Rail between Sydney and Newcastle
3	Review and implement bus service improvements across the Hunter in the next five years to provide better access to employment, healthcare, education, commercial, retail, leisure, tourism and connectivity to other transport modes
4	Start delivery of the Lower Hunter Freight corridor to allow for increased passenger trips on the Central Coast / Newcastle and Hunter rail lines as well as increased freight access to and from the Newcastle Port
5	Develop a package of multimodal transport and service upgrades to support growth in the Broadmeadow Catalyst area
	Support implementation of tourism infrastructure and services including converting non-operational railways into rail trails and providing safe cycling connections to these rail trails from nearby towns

How the Plan reflects this feedback

The Plan recognises the vital role transport plays to support the Hunter region's economy to provide an efficient transport network that can accommodate the region's growing freight demands, enable the transition to renewable energy, and facilitate the expansion of the visitor economy.

One critical aspect of the Plan is the support for the energy transition occurring in the Hunter region. As the coal industry declines, the Plan identifies opportunities to diversify the freight task on the Hunter Valley Coal Network, including increased transport of renewable energy components from the Port of Newcastle to the Central West Orana and Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) including planning for key freight corridors such as the Industrial Drive, Pacific Highway, Maitland Road, New England Highway, and Golden Highway.

The Plan also recognises the importance of the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport as crucial gateways for the Hunter region's economy, ensuring efficient and reliable freight movements exploring opportunities to leverage the planned Lower Hunter Freight Corridor to separate freight from passenger rail services.

Initiatives such as the Shiraz to Shore Cycle Trail demonstrate the Plan's commitment to enhancing active transport options for visitors. Additionally, the Plan proposes to work with councils and industry to improve public transport services for tourism workers and visitors, particularly for access to key attractions.

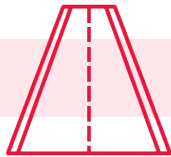
We've updated the Plan to reflect what the community told us about the economy and added or revised initiatives based on community feedback.

Key updates in the Plan:

- updated to the latest available trade volume data
- wording update to clarify the role of the Hunter Valley Coal Network regarding rail access to the Port of Newcastle
- updated with the latest available tourism data
- updated language with use of Visitor Economy when referencing tourism to help strengthen the narrative about the importance of tourism and visitors to the local economy
- additional alignment to key land use policies including NSW Critical Minerals and High-Tech Metals Strategy 2024-35
- changed Shiraz to Shore rail trail to Shiraz to Shore cycle trail, clarified the intended staging in a new map and included the Richmond Vale Rail Trail as a crucial component for the cycle trail for the visitor economy
- additional content aligning with Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development priorities including extractive industry and mineral extraction and reactivation and connection of existing infrastructure to unlock future potential industries
- additional content recognising that key tourism infrastructure can promote improved health outcomes.

Key updates to initiatives:

- broadened initiatives to reference the visitor economy to encompass tourism and visitors in the Hunter region
- updated to reflect a more concise and broad reaching initiative to improve public transport connections to Newcastle Airport, while still addressing the need to accommodate luggage for passengers
- revision of initiatives to demonstrate bus service improvement alignment with the Medium Term Bus Plan and clarify the geographical coverage of service improvements to include additional LGAs; additional detail included to specify target service frequencies and route expansions, particularly for longer-distance and local connections
- expanded initiative for continued replacement of non-heritage listed timber bridges to increase network resilience and improve connectivity to key tourism locations.



7.1.10 Road condition

Expansion of the road network and upgrades to reduce congestion, prepare for growth and address freight needs were of utmost importance to the community.

Many comments emphasise the need for better road maintenance, particularly to address potholes and improving road surfaces.

Congestion was a significant concern, with comments suggesting overtaking lanes and expanding road capacity in peak areas, as well as the need to upgrade specific roads and intersections to enhance safety and efficiency.

Key infrastructure upgrades were highlighted, including the Golden Highway, New England Highway, Thornton Bridge and Nelson Bay Road.

There was strong support for road upgrades to go beyond needs of private vehicles and incorporate multimodal considerations such as prioritising public transport and bus priority lanes, and a strong demand for improved active transport safety measures, including dedicated cycleways and pedestrian paths.



107

Survey respondents provided feedback on initiatives



36

Survey respondents provided other suggestions and comments



44

Roads, motorways/highways or intersections identified through the pins



Figure 6. Weakleys Drive at New England Highway Interchange looking south.

Summary of feedback received

Sub-theme	Summary of feedback
Road safety and maintenance	• There was frustration over potholes, uneven road surfaces and poor maintenance, particularly in Cessnock, Newcastle and Morisset. • Discussion on various dangerous intersections across the region. • Concerns about pedestrian and cyclist safety, with requests for upgraded footpaths, cycle lanes and traffic calming measures. • Challenges with ageing concrete, steel, and heritage-listed timber bridges, with many bridges becoming increasingly unsafe due to natural disasters or accidental damage. • Requests to investigate programs such as Blackspot Funding to help improve safety and mitigate risks to maintain critical infrastructure.
Infrastructure and priority improvements	• Discussion on the need to focus on providing new infrastructure to major growth areas and providing better rural connections. • There were calls for overtaking lanes and improved freight transport options, urgent need to address issues that impact movement of oversize overmass vehicles. • There were calls to accelerate funding or start select upgrades identified in the Draft Plan. • Requests to increase priority of select key upgrades identified in the Draft Plan, and acknowledgement of their importance to improve future public transport and freight needs. • There were requests to investigation additional new road connections and bypasses.
Road congestion and expansion needs	• Concern over traffic congestion, with calls for road widening, duplication, additional lanes and better public transport to ease pressure. • Responses discussed the need to balance road expansion with investments in active and public transport. • Recommendations to reclassify roads to State Roads, which would also assist with future development of key areas.

Importance of draft initiatives

Survey respondents were provided a list of draft initiatives that aligned to economy and were asked to select up to three that were most important to them. The top five initiatives selected are listed below.

	Road condition - top five draft initiatives
1	M1 Pacific Motorway intersection upgrades between Raymond Terrace and Karuah including Medowie Road, The Bucketts Way and Italia Road
2	Upgrade key intersections in Lake Macquarie LGA, including Hillsborough Road, Speers Point roundabout and Main Road, Dora Creek, to improve safety and congestion
3	Investigate options to upgrade Nelson Bay Road corridor between Fern Bay and Williamtown, inclusive of cross connectivity of surrounding residential communities
4	Investigate improvements to Tomago Road from Pacific Highway to Williamtown post completion of M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace
5	Develop and deliver improved rest stop opportunities across the region to support the safe and efficient movement of heavy vehicles

How the Plan reflects this feedback

The Plan recognises the need to addresses key challenges on the road network to help improve connections, safety, support housing growth as well as accommodate growing freight movements.

The Plan identifies several initiatives to upgrade key corridors and intersections to support oversize overmass movements, address congestion, and improve safety.

In just the Lake Macquarie LGA alone initiatives identify Hillsborough Road, Speers Point roundabout and Main Road, Dora Creek, and Pacific Highway around Cams Wharf and Flowers Drive as key intersection upgrades needed to address safety and congestion.

Improvements to the M1 Pacific Motorway, Golden Highway, New England Highway and Cessnock Road (MR195) are identified, which will help which alongside development and delivery of improved rest stop opportunities across the region will help support safe movement of freight and oversize overmass vehicles.

The Plan also identifies incentives to support land use planning including options to upgrade Nelson Bay Road corridor between Fern Bay and Williamtown and upgrade of Newcastle Link Road, which would also include bus priority measures and cycle infrastructure to improve multimodal connections. We’ve updated the Plan to reflect what the community told us about road condition and added or revised initiatives based on community feedback.

Key updates in the Plan:

- acknowledged feedback received, most of which was focused on location specific issues which have been addressed below through the initiatives
- expanded discussion on mode shift to active and public transport options to address congestion challenges
- acknowledged feedback on reclassification of roads, which is out of scope of this Plan but will be provided to relevant area for consideration

- additional content on strategic cycle corridors including mapping proposed future network to support mode shift and improve safety for walking and cycling.

Key updates to initiatives:

- clarified language for replacement of non-heritage listed timber bridges to improve road network resilience
- additional initiative to address safety concerns at at-grade rail level crossings improving network resilience and improve efficiency and safety across the road network
- a number of initiatives were revised for clarity on targeted roads and corridors for connectivity improvements, safety upgrades and network efficiency improvements noting the need to support housing growth and resilience challenges for communities
- inclusion of additional roads for safety and efficiency upgrades in the initiatives including MR220.
- clarified initiatives around improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure
- additional intersection upgrades to address safety issues
- additional initiative to deliver road safety programs in partnership with Councils and the NSW Police to reduce road trauma and improve safety outcomes across the road network
- additional initiative to undertake speed zone reviews and apply safer speed zone settings supporting improvement safety for the road network.

7.2 Plan objectives and challenges

7.2.1 Objectives of the draft Plan

When visiting the Have Your Say page, an optional quick poll asked: **Which SRITP objective is most important to you?**

Respondents were presented with the list of seven objectives of the Draft Plan and ask to select only one objective that was most important to them.

The most selected objective was ‘Access to transport for all’ with 46 per cent of the votes. The results of the poll are outlined in the table below.

Objective		Votes	Percentage
	Starting with Country All investment in the transport network, services, policy and technology take a Country-centred approach	12	4%
	Access to transport for all A transport network that provides a range of travel choices to all people living, working in, or visiting the Hunter region	150	46%
	Well located housing and successful places Support the delivery of housing and successful places through sustainable transport options to address growth in the Hunter	37	11%
	A thriving and diversifying economy Provide an efficient transport network to support a diversifying and growing economy including tourism, freight movements and enabling renewable energy zones	39	12%
	A safe transport network Reduce fatalities and serious injuries on the transport network and address safety concerns for public transport passengers	44	13%
	Resilient networks Reduce the impact of transport network shocks and stresses to service interruptions and proactively plan for future impacts	22	7%
	Net Zero Emissions Contribute to the Net Zero emissions 2050 target	23	7%

Survey respondents were also asked to rate each objective on a five-point scale from 'very important' to 'not important'.

The 'Access to transport for all' objective, which encompass public and active transport connections, and the 'A safe transport network' objective were seen as most important by survey respondents. Both objectives were 'very important' for more than 70 per cent of respondents and either 'very important' or 'important' by more than 95 per cent of respondents. This is again validated by the transport improvements that are most important to survey respondents as discussed in Section 7.3.

One other objective 'Resilient networks' was considered either 'very important' or 'important' by more than 90 per cent of respondents.

Participants of the quick poll were only able to select one objective. This highlighted that 'Access to transport for all', with 46 per cent of the votes and 33 per cent higher than the next most important objective, is a priority for communities across the Hunter. Consistent with the survey question, 'A safe transport network' was the second most important objective in the quick poll, but only one per cent higher than 'A thriving and diversifying economy' and two per cent higher than 'Well-located housing and successful places'.

Even though resilience was seen as the third most important item through the survey, it received only seven per cent of the votes through the quick poll, the same as amount as 'Net zero emissions'.

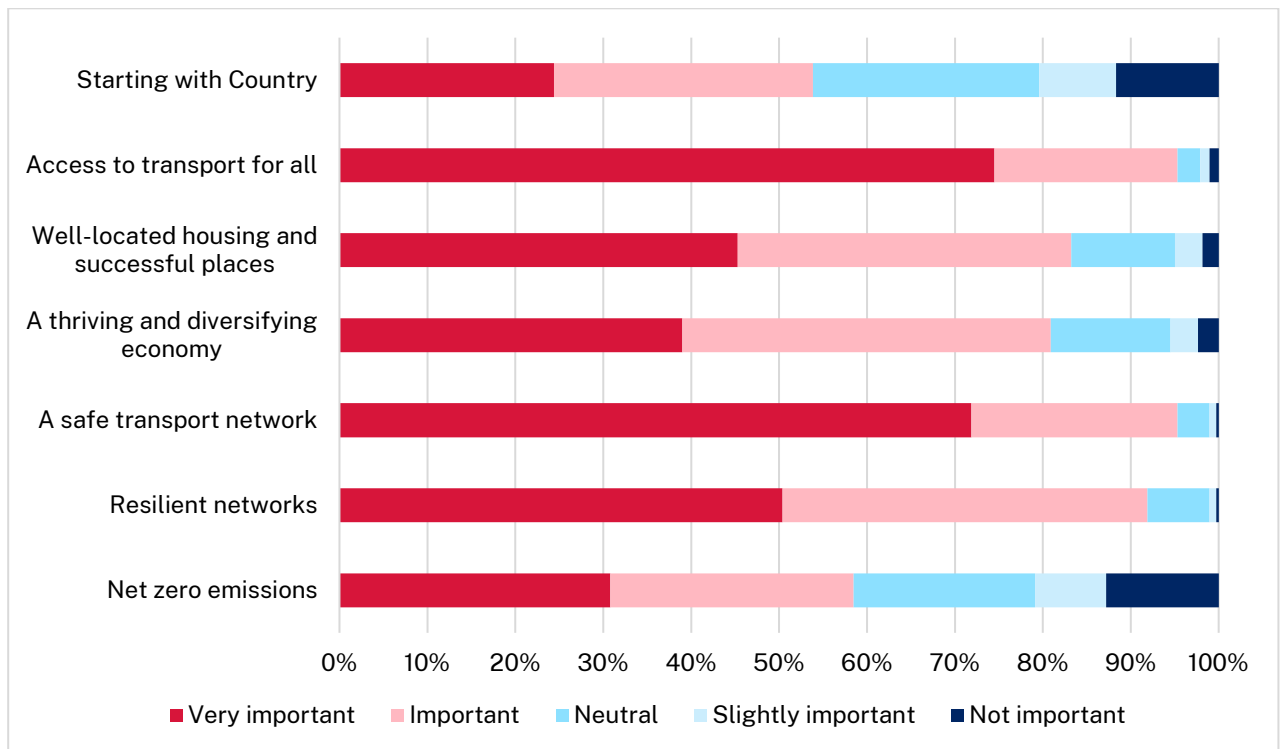


Figure 18. Chart showing percentage of importance of objectives as selected by survey respondents.

7.2.2 Draft Challenges

We also asked participants if they thought we had captured the challenges of the Hunter and whether there was anything we had missed. There were 200 respondents that commented on the question.

Most of the comments were aligned to initiatives and items that needed to be addressed rather than challenges for the region over the next 20 years. More than half of the comments were in relation to public transport and connectivity.

A high-level summary of challenges raised are in the table below.

Item raised	Summary
Public transport coverage and connectivity	Overall, key challenges raised revolve around improving the coverage, frequency, accessibility, and affordability of public transport options, as well as better integrating them with cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and land use planning.
Infrastructure growth and maintenance	Challenges revolve around the need for a more comprehensive, sustainable, and integrated approach to infrastructure planning and delivery to support the region's growth and liveability.
Active transport	Discussion centered around the need for improved active transport infrastructure, including dedicated cycling infrastructure and safer and more accessible pedestrian options, including changes to roads to slow traffic.
Accessibility for individuals with disabilities	Key challenges raised include limited access to public transport, inaccessible infrastructure, need for better wheelchair accessibility and education, and poor connectivity between different transport modes – all of which create significant challenges for people with disabilities accessing jobs and services.
Environmental considerations and green spaces	Maintaining and increasing the quantity of green spaces, as well as improving the health and diversity of existing spaces and waterways, are key environmental challenges that need to be addressed.
Land use planning	Comments relate to the lack of accessibility, inadequate public transport, neglect of regional and rural areas, and the need for more holistic and realistic urban planning approaches that address the unique challenges faced by communities such as bushfire prone areas.

7.3 Transport improvements

Survey respondents were provided a list of eight transport improvement options (inclusive of other) and asked of those listed which were most important to them. Participants were able to select up to three options. This feedback doesn't directly relate to questions asked about the Draft Plan, but it helps validate what is important to the community when not aligned to objectives and not reliant of further comments to gain insight.

Around a third of survey participants agreed that public transport availability, frequency and reliability was important. The top four choices being public transport availability, frequency and reliability, road network including safety, congestion and maintenance, walking and cycling facilities, paths and trails as well as improved connections between transport accounted for more than 85 per cent of options selected.

Those that selected other as their response included specific items for safety, public transport services and infrastructure, road maintenance, and improved connections between transport choices, such as parking at transport hubs as well as mobile connectivity on public transport and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

Importance of transport improvements
(survey respondents)

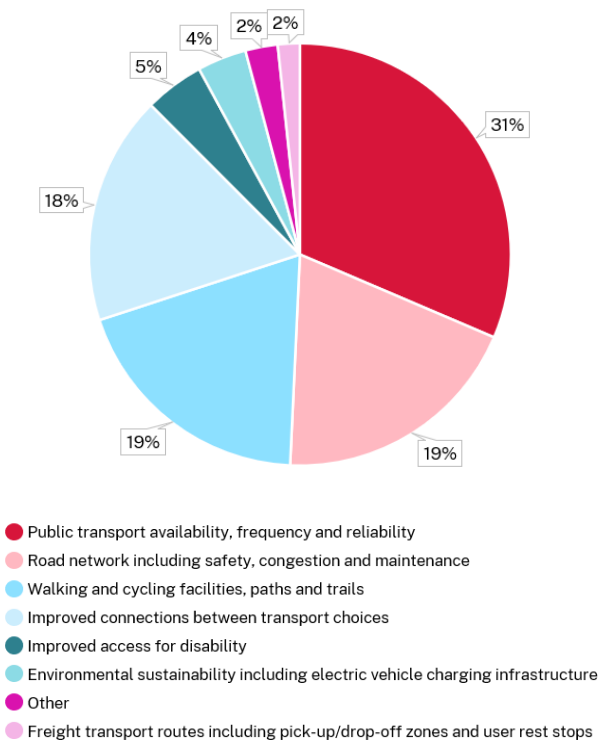


Figure 19. Pie chart showing importance of transport improvement options by survey respondents.

7.4 Other feedback and insights

There were seven survey participants that opted to provide 'other' feedback rather than by theme, however, this feedback fell under one of the key themes summarised in Section 8.1.

At the end of the survey, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide any final feedback, with 127 responses received. Again, these covered a range of topics that mostly fell under the existing key themes summarised in Section 8.1.

Feedback that fell outside of the themes above centered around what real action would be seen from the Plan and investment needed, with opinions that the wider Hunter region often missed out on transport funding due to Sydney projects being prioritised.

There were also comments about more effective engagement with the community, with many feeling left out of the decision-making process and wanting more transparency about meetings and transport plans.

8. Thank you

The Plan for the Hunter has been shaped by significant engagement with key stakeholders and broader community in the region over the last eighteen months.

Coupled with the feedback Transport received during early engagement, face-to-face consultation, such as workshops and briefing sessions, we received over 1500 pieces of feedback to inform the Plan.

We would like to extend gratitude to all community members and stakeholders who took the time to offer insights and feedback, whether it be via map pin, survey response, or submission. We heard a huge range of transport related issues, and your insights have helped us better understand the region, and the challenges, needs, and opportunities for communities, contributing to the development of the Plan.

The Plan now comprises of more than 49 short and medium-term initiatives as well as long term and statewide initiatives. Some of these initiatives are already in planning while other new priorities will require further investigation to determine their feasibility. The Plan includes more detail about how we will deliver the initiatives, including governance and reporting.

As we deliver the Plan, we will continue to work collaboratively with local government, other stakeholders and communities.

Thank you again for your ongoing involvement and interest in future transport planning.

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix A – Previous engagement as part of the Hunter Regional Transport Plan (RTP)

The community and stakeholders were invited to provide feedback the Draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan (RTP) when was placed on public exhibition from Saturday 1 October to Friday 4 December 2022.

Comments could be provided through an online survey, via email or in writing with more than 129 submissions received during the consultation period from all parts of the community, including industry, local interest groups, residents, visitors, business, and Local Government.

High-level summary of feedback received:

- Feedback received from councils and industry mainly focused on process and planning issues, such as a strong desire from councils to ensure planning alignment with DPHI Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and ongoing collaboration across land use agencies and transport to improve the integration with new developments support growth as well as plan for the decline of the coal industry.
- In relation to freight, planning for increase and changes to freight, diversifying and upgrading existing freight links and incorporating over mass vehicle movements.
- Over a third of comments received from the display of the draft Hunter RTP were in relation to improving public transport including access, frequency, operating hours, connections, timetabling, reliability and route information. Particularly connections to key services such as hospitals, Newcastle airport, Hunter Stadium and University of Newcastle and transport to schools. Many community members referenced the previous bus timetable.
- Improved connections between public transport types, improved interchanges and connections to the airport.
- Active transport connections to be more joined up with a connected network across Newcastle along with improving bike storage at interchanges and supporting cycling tourism.
- With such strong commitments from NSW Government, there have been calls for greater net zero initiatives and connections to how we will meet targets for emission reductions.

9.2 Appendix B – Summary of targeted engagement during development of the draft SRITP

Early engagement during the development of the draft SRITP was carried out in 2024. Details of this engagement and a full list of stakeholders is in the Early Engagement Report.

More than 17		Workshops, meetings and briefings
More than 500		Ideas and suggestions
442		Pins on the Have Your Say portal
6		Formal submissions received

9.3 Appendix C – Media release

OFFICIAL

Yasmin Catley

Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism
Minister for the Hunter



Jenny Aitchison

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads

Media Release

Have your say and help us shape the future of transport in the Hunter

Monday, December 16, 2024

The Draft Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (SRITP) has been released for public consultation and Transport for NSW is inviting feedback from the community to help shape the final plan, due for release in 2025.

The Draft Hunter SRITP outlines a vision for transport in the region where all communities are well connected by high quality transport infrastructure and services, allowing people to walk, ride, catch public transport or use their private vehicle safely.

The Hunter region is changing, with significant population growth and increased freight movements within and through the region.

Early engagement activities have been carried out in recent months with local councils, Members of Parliament and key regional representative groups, together with community insights from more than 2000 visits to Transport's Have Your Say platform.

Through this extensive consultation, analysis and investigation, Transport has identified more than 55 short and medium-term initiatives, which are now on public exhibition for broader community input.

The Draft Hunter SRITP and related documents are available at www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/sritp/hunter with submissions invited until Friday 28 February 2025 via that page or by emailing engage.sritps@transport.nsw.gov.au. Pop-up events will also be scheduled in early 2025 for Transport representatives to talk with local communities.

The Draft Hunter SRITP is one of nine Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans (SRITPs) being developed to better reflect the transport needs of regional communities now and into the future.

Expanding on previous transport plans, the SRITPs focus on delivering integrated short, medium and long-term solutions to help drive economic growth, improve connectivity, and enhance the quality of life for residents in the regions.

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, Jenny Aitchison:

"We're listening to the community, stakeholders, and experts to create a transport network that meets the diverse and dynamic needs of the Hunter region, including its major cities and small villages, across all modes of transport.

"I urge all residents, businesses, community and industry groups to visit the website, take a look at the draft plan and share your feedback.

"A lot of work has gone into developing the draft and we want to make sure Transport for NSW gets it right when it comes to developing the final plan.

02 7225 6000

52 Martin Place Sydney NSW 2000

GPO Box 5341 Sydney NSW 2001

1

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

"Once all feedback is considered, the final plan will be prepared and released next year.

"The final plan will be accompanied by an implementation strategy to ensure we deliver better transport and road networks across the region and I am excited to see what the community feedback is and what the final plan looks like."

Quote attributable to Minister for the Hunter, Yasmin Catley:

"With more people moving to and visiting the Hunter, it's critical we have quality and accessible public transport.

"It's important this plan accounts for the Hunter's diverse communities and everyone who lives there, which is why we're consulting widely with community and experts.

"We want to better serve the people who live in this area and ensure they have access to more services and more places, across all days of the week.

"Our existing transport infrastructure network will be reimagined to support improved roads and public transport connections between homes, work, education, healthcare services and entertainment precincts so everyone can get where they need to be and make the most of our region."

MEDIA:

Wendy Fitzgibbon | Minister Aitchison | 0408 427 540

Ashley Wick | Minister Catley | 0484 762 351

9.4 Appendix D – Briefings, workshops and community sessions

Details of engagement	Participants	Date
Hunter SRITP preview Online session with industry stakeholders	• Business Hunter • Hunter Planning Alliance • Committee for the Hunter • Urban Development Institute of Australia • Hunter Property Council	11 December 2024
Hunter SRITP preview Online session with Council Mayors and General Managers	• Hunter JO • Cessnock Council • Dungog Council • Lake Macquarie Council • Maitland Council • Newcastle City Council • MidCoast Council • Muswellbrook Council • Port Stephens Council • Singleton Council • Upper Hunter • Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure	11 December 2024
Hunter SRITP preview Online session with Council Planners	• Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure • Hunter JO • Cessnock Council • Dungog Council • Lake Macquarie Council • Maitland Council • Newcastle City Council • MidCoast Council • Muswellbrook Council • Port Stephens Council • Singleton Council • Upper Hunter	12 December 2024
Community drop-in sessions at Newcastle NSW Government Service Centre	Community members	10 February 2025
Community drop-in sessions at Maitland NSW Government Service Centre	Community members	11 February 2025
Community drop-in sessions at Taree NSW Government Service Centre	Community members	13 February 2025

In person workshop	• Hunter JO • Committee for the Hunter • Singleton Council • Hunter Planning Alliance • UDIA • Newcastle Airport • Property Council of Australia • Port of Newcastle • Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association • Brokenwood Wines • Hunternet Career Connections • University of Newcastle • Hunter New England Local Health District • RTBU • MaiWel	19 February 2025
Online briefing	Singleton Council	21 February 2025

9.5 Appendix E – List of submission contributors in response to the Draft Plan

No	Submission
1	Action for public transport
2	Australian Logistics Council
3	ARTC
4	Belford Land
5	Bicycle NSW
6	Business Hunter
7	BusNSW
8	Catholic Diocese of Maitland Newcastle
9	Clean Energy Association of Newcastle and Surrounds
10	Cessnock City Council
11	Dungog Shire Council
12	Maitland City Council
13	MidCoast Council
14	City of Newcastle
15	Dantia
16	Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation
17	High Speed Rail Authority
18	Hunter Environment lobby
19	Individual
20	Individual
21	Individual
22	Individual
23	Individual

24	Individual
25	Individual
26	Individual
27	Individual
28	Individual
29	Individual
30	Individual
31	Individual
32	Individual
33	Individual
34	Individual
35	Individual
36	Individual
37	Individual
38	Individual
39	Individual
40	Individual
41	Seventh Day Adventist Church
42	Port of Newcastle
43	Rail Trails Australia
44	People with a Disability Australia
45	Roche Group
46	Richmond Vale Rail Trail Supporters Group
47	Train to Cessnock
48	Two More Trains For Singleton

49	Urban Development Institute of Australia
50	Voice of Wallalong and Woodville
51	Lake Macquarie City Council
52	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
53	Singleton Council
54	Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
55	Committee for the Hunter
56	Property Council of Australia
57	University of Newcastle
58	Anonymous
59	Port Stephens Tourism
60	Individual
61	Individual
62	Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association
63	Port Stephens Council
64	Upper Hunter Shire Council
65	Destination NSW
66	LALC Awabakal
67	Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils
68	Individual

9.6 Appendix F – Notable changes in response to feedback

Changes to the Plan narrative

Section of the Document	What we've changed and why
Throughout	- All references to 2022 Travel Zone Projections (TZP 22) updated to the most current 2024 TZP. This includes graphics, maps, StoryMaps, text references, analysis and insights. - During development of the Draft Plan, Transport was required to use the most up-to-date data available at the time, this was the TZP 22 forecasts. Three days prior to the Draft Plan's public exhibition, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure released its latest forecasts (TZP 24). - Singleton and Dungog LGA population forecasts changed from a decline to an increase. This has been adjusted and reflected throughout the Plan. Transport reviewed its draft initiatives and they were not altered for this, although the analysis underpinning the prioritisation within the Implementation Plan has used the updated figures.
Throughout	Removal of all reference to draft and upcoming engagement. To reflect the stage in Plan development.
Throughout	Use of Visitor Economy when referencing tourism. Visitor Economy language raised in Trip Generator workshop hosted in February 2025. Stakeholder feedback suggested the update to strengthen the narrative about the importance of tourism and visitors (who may come for business conferences, etc) to the local economy.
Throughout	Changed Higher Productivity Vehicle to High Productivity Vehicle throughout the document to reflect terminology recognised and used by industry and freight partners.
Throughout	Changed Shiraz to Shore rail trail to Shiraz to Shore cycle trail and referenced the Richmond Vale Rail Trail section in response to stakeholder feedback.
To the reader of this Plan	- Removal of draft references and how to provide feedback. - Additional content and summary of what we heard from public exhibition. - To reflect the stage in Plan development.
01 Starting with Country and Closing the Gap	- Removed reference to Mooney Mooney, as it is outside the area of the Plan. - Corrected the tense of a reference to the Awabakal people.
2.2.2 Transport (Strategic context)	Additional land use and transport policies referenced.
3.2 Objectives and outcomes	- Additional content on alignment with Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) priorities including: - extractive industry and mineral extraction - reactivation and connection of existing infrastructure to unlock future potential industries - recognising key tourism infrastructure to promote health.

4.2 Changing economy (Port diversification)	- Updated to the latest available trade volume data. - Wording update to clarify the role of the Hunter Valley Coal Network in regard to rail access to the Port of Newcastle.
4.2 Changing economy (Tourism and the visitor economy)	Updated with the latest available tourism data.
4.3.1 How people travel	Revised map to visualise frequency of services at rail stations and improve reader experience.
5.2.2 Providing services and infrastructure to match the needs of a changing and growing population	New callout box highlighting the Safe Accessible Transport (SAT) Program and key program locations in the Hunter.
5.2.2 Providing services and infrastructure to match the needs of a changing and growing population	Updated population figures to reflect currently available data.
5.3 Well-located housing and successful places	Refined content to align with DPHI housing and planning reforms.
5.4.3 Supporting the safe and efficient movement of all freight on roads and rail (Economy)	Additional content on east-west connectivity, the RNEW program and increasing capacity of the rail network for moving freight.
5.5 A safe transport network	- Crash data updated to reflect the latest five-year finalised data (2019 to 2023). - Text, maps, infographics were updated accordingly. - Greta fatal bus crash added with commentary provided by Centre for Road Safety. - Additional text on safe speed limits to strengthen road safety narrative.
5.5.4 Safety and perceived safety concerns on public transport and at stops and stations	- Additional context was added in response to feedback from submissions on personal safety and security. - Insights from the Safer Cities Survey were added to quantify perceptions of personal safety and how this influences travel choice.
5.7.1 Electric vehicle uptake and low emission technologies and infrastructure (Net zero)	- Additional content on low and zero emission technologies for freight. - Added reference to NSW Towards Net Zero Freight Emissions Policy.
5.7.2 Improving active and public transport choices in centres (Net zero emissions)	- Additional detail to expand the narrative on improving active transport choices in centres with reference to the Strategic Cycleway Corridor Program. - New map illustrating the mapped strategic cycleway network for Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle.

5.7.3 Prioritising sustainable decision making and reducing Transport's construction emissions (Net zero)	- Additional content on the need for Transport to consider decarbonisation beyond electric vehicles and reference to new policies. - Reference to Biodiversity policy and call out on the Net Zero and Circular Economy Guidelines.
07 Next steps	- A short explanation has been included under the headings of Statewide, Short Term and Mid-term Initiatives. - Added additional sentences to respond to a number of submissions that asked about more transparency, the process of implementation and committing to delivery.

Changes to initiatives

Initiative	Change or addition
Initiatives that are statewide and did not include a specific project e.g. EV Charging, EV buses, real travel time information, integrated ticketing, safety etc.	New table of 12 Statewide initiatives, acknowledging that while, they have a state-wide remit, they will deliver transport benefits for the Hunter region and its communities.
Initiative 6	Initiative has been updated to explicitly state the bus service improvements align with the Medium Term Bus Plan. It expands the geographical coverage to include additional LGAs, and provides more specific details on target service frequencies and new route expansions, particularly for longer-distance and local connections.
Initiative 7 - Introduce Hunter Rail Line Strategy	Strengthen Initiative 7 and commit to the Development of a Hunter Rail Strategy. This will be broadened for clarity and to include new options for expanded service and to make sure it aligns with larger rail considerations such as Narromine to Port of Newcastle.
Initiative 11	Consolidated language to broaden scope to review ferry operations and infrastructure.
Initiative 18	Initiative updated to focus more broadly on providing safe and efficient cross-connectivity, facilitating housing growth, and improving active and public transport along the corridor.
Initiative 22	New initiative - Redirecting the TAP and TOD statement into Safe Accessible Transport program.
Initiative 23 - Refinement of Morisset action	Updating Initiative to include additional detail such as station upgrade example linked to the need for local precinct work to support the scale of proposed growth and expansion of the cycling network to connect neighbouring communities.

Initiative 30	Updated to include reference to Richmond Vale and language changes: • Tourism to visitor economy • Rail trails to cycle trails.
Initiative 36	Initiative is updated to provide a more comprehensive approach by addressing the safety issues on the high-speed regional roads, but also aligning the transport improvements to support the housing growth and community resilience in the Forster-Tuncurry area.
Initiative 40	Language updated to reflect a more concise and broad-reaching initiative to improve public transport connections to Newcastle Airport, while still addressing the need to accommodate customers with luggage.
Initiative 45	Updated to align the bus service improvements with the Medium-Term Bus Plan, expands the geographical coverage to include additional LGAs and connections outside the Hunter Region, and provides more detailed service frequency targets as well as specific examples of expanded day return opportunities and increased local bus service availability.
Initiative 48	The addition of investigating new ferry services.
Initiative 50	Added geographical detail regarding MR195 and the addition of upgrade investigations for MR220.
Language adjustments coming out of the Committee for the Hunter workshop	Following an initiative-by-initiative review and assessment in the February workshop there were some text adjustments and clarifications. See section 6.4 for details.

Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan Consultation Summary Report

October 2025 Transport for NSW.

ISBN 978-1-923242-22-7

DISCLAIMER

While all care is taken in producing and publishing this work, no responsibility is taken or warranty made with respect to the accuracy of any information, data or representation. The authors (including copyright owners) and publishers expressly disclaim all liability in respect of anything done or omitted to be done and the consequences upon reliance of the contents of this publication.

© State of New South Wales (Transport for NSW)

Users are welcome to copy, reproduce and distribute the information contained in this report for non-commercial purposes only, provided acknowledgment is given to Transport for NSW as the source. Unless otherwise stated all images are the property of Transport for NSW however any third part use of photography will require prior written permission.

Transport for NSW
231 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000