

# Swansea Channel Dredging

## Community Update

Transport for NSW | December 2022

**The NSW Government is delivering projects to help the boating and wider community safely access, use and navigate our inland and coastal waters.**

### Background

Dredging is an important management activity that assists to maintain navigation channels and provide access maritime infrastructure and waterways that are otherwise restricted to natural sand shoaling.

In 2020, the NSW Government announced that Swansea Channel was a priority location and a dredging project for Swansea Channel was in development.

### What is happening now?

We had planned to complete a dredging campaign prior to Christmas to assist navigation during the boating season.

We were unable to start dredging at this time due to the presence of endangered shore birds including the Little Terns which are currently nesting on sand island until February.

As part of ongoing monitoring of the channel, we have identified that the “Airforce Channel” which runs east-west between Naru Point and the lake, has been naturally deepening and now provides an alternative navigational route into Lake Macquarie.

At high tide the Airforce Channel has a consistent depth of between 1.5m and 2.0m making it deeper than the north-south channel

through the “dog-leg” which only has a clear depth of 1.0m.

We will be marking the channel with aid to navigation markers in December to indicate the temporary additional navigational access into Lake Macquarie.



### When will dredging happen?

The dredging campaign we had planned for prior to Christmas will now take place following the end of the nesting season of endangered shore birds around February 2023.

## Review of Environmental Factors

A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) is a legislative planning and project approvals document. Every REF for dredging projects needs to be extremely comprehensive and look at all the environmental impacts, different methodologies of dredging, locations and method of sand placement including a number of flora and fauna studies that need to be completed which takes considerable time.

Work is continuing on the development of the REF for this project and we will explore multiple options for dredging activities in this area, which can be used over the next 10-years for multiple dredging projects.

We are also now investigating as a potential option using the Airforce Channel as the main navigation channel into the lake given it is naturally deepening, may be self-sustaining and require fewer dredging interventions in the future.

We now anticipate this 10-year REF will be ready in early 2023 for display.

## Navigation advice

The Airforce Channel will be a temporary additional navigational access to Lake Macquarie.

We will be placing navigational aid markers to assist navigation through this area.

Marine Rescue will broadcast this additional navigation option via a Securite message on frequency 27MHZ and VHF16.

Conditions and depths can change regularly so caution should be used when navigating either channel.

Skippers of deep-drafted vessels of more than one metre are advised to carefully plan any trips through this channel, navigate with caution and, if in doubt, avoid the trip entirely.

We would also like to remind skippers of their responsibility to assess conditions before negotiating any marine channel.

## Next Steps

We will:

- install navigation aid markers on Airforce Channel
- arrange dredging campaign after shore bird nesting season early next year about February.
- display the REF and seek community feedback

## Contact us

If you have any questions or would like more information on Swansea Channel Dredging project, please contact our team on:



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