

# Regional Freight Forums 2022: Feedback Summary Report

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# Overview

## Regional Freight Forums 2022

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) held a series of seven Regional Freight Forums in October and November 2022 to discuss projects and initiatives to support the industry into the future.

This report provides a summary of the events, including the issues and discussion raised on the day.

We spoke to key stakeholders, customers and industry in:

- **Parkes:** Thursday 27 October at Parkes Services Club
- **Dubbo:** Friday 28 October at Macquarie Inn
- **Grafton:** Monday 31 October at Grafton District Services Club
- **Tamworth:** Wednesday 2 November at Best Western Sanctuary Inn
- **Singleton:** Thursday 3 November at Singleton Diggers
- **Griffith:** Friday 4 November at Exies Griffith Main Club
- **Narrabri:** Friday 11 November at The Crossing Theatre

## Regional Forum themes

Theme / summary of discussion points raised by attendees	TfNSW activities and actions
<p><b>Rest stops</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreasing number of rest stops across key freight routes. The capacity at rest stops does not meet the current and future increasing freight task</li> <li>Lack of capacity in rest stops along key freight routes of the Pacific, Hume, New England highways</li> <li>Lack of adequate facilities (toilets and showers) and maintenance</li> <li>Design of rest stops not suitable for drivers to adequately rest and refresh i.e. Rest stops not built on flat ground, parking configuration can cause sleep interruption</li> <li>Caravans parking in heavy vehicle bays</li> <li>Inadequate facilities to allow drivers to wash, eat, refresh</li> <li>Loss of shade due to tree removal.</li> </ul>	<p>TfNSW recognises roads are a heavy vehicle driver’s workplace, and rest stops are important facilities to support heavy vehicle drivers, including providing an opportunity for drivers to take their mandatory rest breaks.</p> <p>Improving the number and quality of heavy vehicle rest stops is a priority for the road freight industry and TfNSW. Heavy vehicle drivers are performing key tasks which support the NSW and national economy, and they provide a critical service to communities. Drivers require reliable access to rest stops with a good standard and with basic amenities in order to perform their jobs.</p> <p>TfNSW successfully influenced the inclusion of the ‘Provision of NSW Heavy Vehicle Rest Stops’ in the 2022 Infrastructure Australia Priority list and have been engaging with the road freight sector on priorities through focus groups and digital engagement.</p> <p>Current work under way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploring options for new rest stopping options in Greater Sydney, including partnering with the private sector to deliver highway services to the freight sector</li> <li>Green reflector site audits have been completed to identify compliance of existing sites with the Green Reflector Manual</li> <li>Improvements being made to the information provided on the NSW Digital Rest Area Map</li> <li>Further analysis and investigation of CCTV trials to monitor light vehicle use at specific parking locations and investigate solutions</li> <li>Completed rest stop upgrades on the following corridors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Golden Highway; Willy Wally and Cassillis Park</li> <li>Pacific Highway; Kennedys Gap, Chapmans North Bound, Coolongolook Ampol Northbound and Southbound</li> </ul> </li> <li>Heavy Vehicle Rest Stop Improvement Program to identify funding to address gaps and deficiencies in the heavy vehicle rest stop network.</li> </ul>

## Heavy Vehicle Access Policy

- Issues with inconsistent decision making by road managers
- The importance of engaging with Councils to realise freight benefits through informed access decision making
- Rail level crossing and rail bridge constraints don't make sense and restrict productivity and safety gains.

A priority program for TfNSW is achieving a step change in access.

The review of the NSW Heavy Vehicle Access Policy, which has included consultation with industry during 2022 will enable new ways to improve the road network's capacity and capability, encourage the use of higher productivity vehicles and uptake of technology solutions. This will be implemented in part through the Automated Access Assessment Program and delivered in partnership with the freight industry, local councils, agencies and key stakeholders.

TfNSW has been working with ARTC on access across level crossings that are causing constraints on the network. The work to date is collecting data on different heavy vehicles using the network to understand what vehicles are suitable for level crossings.

## Rail and road investment for freight outcomes

- Remaining funding from the Fixing Country Rail budget and where it will be spent.
- Interest in understanding funding for future rail improvement so they can invest and make rail a viable option.
- Requested early engagement with the freight industry on infrastructure prioritisation. This will allow for private sector investment in the long term.
- Ensuring that investment in all roads (state, local and regional) produce a productivity benefit.
- Need infrastructure prioritisation to reflect future fleet for high productivity vehicles.
- Investment prioritisation to set network standards for critical oversize and/or overmass (OSOM) routes.

TfNSW has commenced early scoping for next phase of rail planning, beyond Fixing Country Rail. Engagement with the freight industry on key issues and investment priorities will be an important part of this process.

TfNSW has recently released the [Freight Benefit Guidelines](#) (Guidelines) to assist transport planners, infrastructure managers and project teams in better capturing and quantifying the benefits of freight, including efficiency and access. These Guidelines demonstrates the linkages between the Transport and Infrastructure State Outcomes and these quantified benefits to support prioritisation of investment in freight.

TfNSW will continue to engage with the freight industry and local government on investment and projects.

Work is underway to seek funding to understand and upgrade key constraints on key OSOM routes, such as the Golden Highway, to enable improved movements and support the Regional Energy Zones.

## Road maintenance

- Quality and consistency of maintenance, safety and road work signage.

Temporary traffic management is a critical responsibility for TfNSW to ensure the safety of its workforce and road users customers, and is overseen by an executive level governance committee.

This committee ensures that technical guidance is provided, and practices are regularly reviewed and improved. The committee also oversees the development of specifications and guidelines which are used right across the state.

Of note is TfNSW's Traffic Control at Work Sites (TC@WS) Manual, and traffic systems quality assurance specifications. These technical documents form the basis of all traffic management arrangements across the state, including in contracts.

These documents provide consistent and contemporary technical guidance for practitioners for the design, management, and implementation of temporary traffic management at our worksites.

TfNSW has recently improved its capacity to undertake inspections and audits on traffic guidance schemes.

All guidelines are regularly reviewed and updated. TC@WS was updated in December 2022, with improvements to sign posting so that it is clearer to road users when they are encountering a road hazard versus road works.

If customers have concerns or feedback about particular road work sites, these can be reported through the [Roads and Waterways online customer enquiry](#) with the location and the description of the issue.

<p><b>National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Misunderstanding about NHVR’s roles and responsibilities, particularly since the transition of services for compliance and enforcement</li><li>• Feedback that the Performance Based Standards (PBS) administration is not working</li><li>• Better alignment between compliance and regulation.</li></ul>	<p>This feedback will input into the reform as part of the Heavy Vehicle National Law.</p>
<p><b>OSOM pilots &amp; escorts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seeking accreditation escort scheme in NSW</li><li>• Seeking mapping of restricted structures and constraints on the Golden Highway, New England, Kamilaroi highways for OSOM.</li></ul>	<p>TfNSW acknowledges this is a long-standing issue for OSOM operators. TfNSW and the NHVR will need to investigate and scope the project and understand roles and responsibilities since the return of delegation to the NHVR in 2022.</p> <p>Prioritisation of key freight routes will be investigated to understand investment required to overcome constraints for OSOM.</p> <p>TfNSW will be installing bridge monitoring equipment on key bridges across the Golden Highway to increase access, which applies the same model as on Sheahan Bridge on the Hume Highway.</p>
<p><b>Resilience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The need for a resilient network and rebuilding to a better standard.</li><li>• To consider operational as well as infrastructure resilience, including mapping alternate routes that can temporarily take same access for limited periods. Ensuring infrastructure prioritisation is aligned to alternate routes.</li><li>• Planning for rail impacts where no alternate routes and how to move critical and nationally significant supplies.</li></ul>	<p>TfNSW is working with local government to increase the resilience of assets impacted by natural disasters during the 2022 devastating flooding events across NSW. This will address the acute issues associated with recovery of the network with additional investment aimed at increased resilience on key assets.</p> <p>Additionally, TfNSW is working with local government on Journey Resilience Plans which will look at short to medium term investments across regional transport networks to minimise both the frequency and duration of disruptions and reconnect journeys faster.</p>

## Damage to transport network due to wet weather

- Timeliness of repairs to the rail network
- Time to re-open roads due to flooding, there should be a prioritisation based on community and industry need
- Safety of some of the major freight routes due to deteriorating condition
- Labour force availability for both local and state roads
- Acknowledgement of good communications on impacts from TfNSW
- Request for a Live Traffic type app for rail impacts, operators reported that navigating three rail networks across NSW for a single journey is challenging.

The extent of the damage to the transport network during 2022 has been unprecedented and will take a long time to restore to previous condition. Immediate works to re-open roads and rail lines has occurred with crews working around the clock to prioritise critical corridors, such as the Newell Highway, being a key state road and freight corridor, and Parkes to Broken Hill, rail line west of Condobolin, due to significant washaways.

The process/criteria to typically re-open roads are:

- Once flood water has receded and it is safe to do so, crews inspect the road to assess damage. This includes damage to the road surface as well as road infrastructure such as guard rail and abutments.
- Clean-up is undertaken and repairs are made. Depending on the extent of the damage, in some cases traffic control with a speed limit reduction may be put in place until the road can be restored to its original condition.

More than 200 additional road crew have been resourced to West Region to assist with rebuilding the road network.

## Rail and road freight policy and strategy

- Need for cohesion

The interconnectivity of road and rail to support the safe, sustainable and productive movement of goods is a guiding principle in the work to deliver improved freight outcomes for the people of NSW.

TfNSW is currently working to identify priority initiatives to ensure continued improvement of freight in the short, medium and long term.

The work will recognise the importance of freight as an integrated element of the transport system, critical to all customers and communities.

Landscape and market challenges are being explored; from pandemic pressures, natural disasters, to increased demand for goods to inform priorities.

This work is being undertaken as part of the standard government strategy development process. Engagement and consultation opportunities with stakeholders will be available throughout the lifecycle of the project to leverage industry expertise at the appropriate time.



## Freight corridor preservation

- Importance of preservation, including from conflicts in land use and curfews

TfNSW supports the long-term protection and retention of lands for industrial uses, to ensure urban commercial and residential areas are supported by a safe and efficient freight task.

These lands are integral to supply chain functions and strategies such as the NSW Freight and Ports Plan and National Supply Chain Strategy highlight the importance of retaining and protecting industrial lands for freight and logistics purposes.

The Greater Sydney Commission are leading the review and assessment of potential changes to the existing retain and management policy. Other approaches to managing industrial land (Review and Manage and Plan and Manage) will be considered in the 2023 update to the Greater Sydney Region Plans. TfNSW will continue to provide advice and support.

## Inland Rail

- Limited information available on the commissioning of Inland Rail and how it connects to the NSW network.
- Industry is unable to evaluate potential use of Inland Rail.

TfNSW inputted into the Inland Rail Review led by Dr Kerry Schott AO.

TfNSW will work with the Federal Government and ARTC to implement the recommendations to support freight across NSW.

Feedback across these forums have been valuable in understanding the needs of industry in relation to Inland Rail.

## Port of Newcastle

- Discussion about the potential need, support and viability of a container terminal at Port of Newcastle to support regional export from northwest NSW
- Importance of export efficiency.

The NSW Government drives strategies to improve efficiency at NSW ports and ensures there are appropriate mechanisms in place to maintain high standards of safety and environmental protection in the trading ports and coastal waters of NSW.

NSW's port policy is outlined in the NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023 and the State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038.

To meet the State's future container trade needs, Port Botany will remain the key container port. 80 per cent of import containers from Port Botany travel no further than 40 kilometres from the port and 90 per cent within 50 kilometres.

Port Kembla was identified as the location for the development of a future container terminal to augment capacity at Port Botany where required.

The development of a container terminal in Newcastle is a matter for the private port operator, the Port of Newcastle.

<p><b>Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning for OSOM movements to enable domestic renewable energy and domestic manufacturing of components</li><li>• Need for greater certainty by government on alternative fuels to support investment.</li></ul>	<p>TfNSW is part of the renewable energy zones government initiative led by the Department of Planning and Environment and EnergyCo and are providing advice for both road and rail transportation opportunities.</p> <p>This will look at identifying key routes for moving large components associated with renewable energy, set consistent standards on managing the journeys across the network, and work with industry around incremental upgrades to networks to facilitate the movements on identified corridors where OSOM movements are supported. This will be balanced in consideration to minimising impacts on rural town amenity and other customer journeys.</p>
<p><b>Service NSW</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulties with processes at Service NSW for registration of vehicles.</li></ul>	<p>This feedback has been provided to Service NSW.</p>
<p><b>OneRoad</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Single platform for the entire road network has been welcomed, particularly with the extensive damage to the network</li><li>• Councils wanting assurance that there is no additional cost to them.</li></ul>	<p>Since the 2019/20 bushfire season, TfNSW has delivered several updates to the real-time traffic information platform Live Traffic NSW. The latest of which is the launch of OneRoad, a cloud-based solution that enables real-time information on traffic conditions, incidents, and major events to be shared across state and council roads on Live Traffic NSW.</p> <p>There has been a staged approach to include local government managed roads, with 38 Local Government Areas (LGAs) currently available on Live Traffic NSW.</p> <p>By 2024, all 128 LGAs will be given the opportunity to publish local road incidents onto Live Traffic NSW through OneRoad, expanding the reach of traffic information to all roads in NSW.</p>
<p><b>Livestock</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Livestock drivers looking for accreditation for animal welfare.</li></ul>	<p>This would require investigation by TfNSW and NHVR to look at whether licensing could be tied to animal welfare and mass, similar to dangerous goods.</p> <p>The feedback will be submitted as part of the reform of the Heavy Vehicle National Law.</p>

## Partnering with local government

- Support with funding applications by councils and access to State government owned data would be beneficial
- Partnering with local government for end-to-end freight journeys and maintaining higher productivity access on local and regional roads.

TfNSW collaborates with councils to identify transport needs and funding sources to support delivery.

Work is underway on a freight data strategy to identify gaps and opportunities to collect, analyse and share data. The first stage of this is the [NSW Freight Data Hub](#), and the [National Data Hub](#), managed by the Commonwealth.

TfNSW works with local government to support increased access of higher productivity vehicles on council managed roads. Examples of this is the [Farm Gate Access Network](#) which is a council opt-in network that enables conditional area-wide access for higher productivity vehicles transporting grain and livestock, connecting the first and last mile to the farm gate.

Further engagement with local government will take place on the draft refresh of the NSW Heavy Vehicle Access Policy and development of the Automated Access Assessment Program.

## Infrastructure prioritisation

These projects were put forward by attendees as priorities:

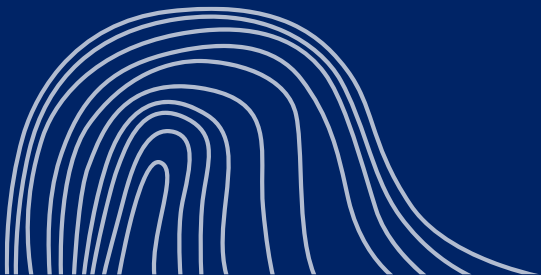
- Reactivating the Tarana to Oberon rail corridor to link timber with mills
- Gulgong to Maryvale rail line
- North Bourke to Narromine, Mitchell Highway increase to PBS Level 3.
- Funding to address Golden Highway bridge constraints and whether a Sheahan Bridge approach be applied to mass restrictions on the Golden Highway
- Moss Vale to Unanderra line lengthy closure –how this may inform a business case for Maldon to Dombarton, particularly cost to business.
- More resilient east west links –road and rail

This feedback will be provided to inform investment prioritisation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bells Line of Road as an alternative corridor to the Great Western Highway. Including a reliable bridge over the Nepean River.</li></ul>	
<h3>Singleton Bypass</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project update</li><li>• Compensation for landholders.</li></ul>	<p>TfNSW is planning for a future New England Highway through investment across the corridor. The Singleton Bypass will improve traffic flow, travel times and safety for all customers and greater efficiency for freight. The Australian Government has committed \$560 million and the NSW Government \$140 million to build the Singleton Bypass. A contract is expected to be announced in mid-2023.</p> <p>Private properties may be acquired when the NSW Government needs land to build public projects, such as the Singleton Bypass. These projects improve services for the community and provide infrastructure for the state's growing population and the process is governed by the Just Terms Act.</p> <p>Property acquisition can be an emotional and stressful experience and TfNSW aims to make this process fair, transparent and easy to understand. For more information about the process, please visit the <a href="#">Centre for Property Acquisition</a>.</p> <p><b>Project contact:</b> Joel Rosendahl, Project Development Manager</p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 1800 991 254</p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:singleton.bypass@transport.nsw.gov.au">singleton.bypass@transport.nsw.gov.au</a></p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="https://roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/new-england-highway/singleton-bypass/index.html">https://roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/new-england-highway/singleton-bypass/index.html</a></p>
<h3>Great Western Highway and changes to federal funding commitments</h3>	<p>Following the election of the new NSW State Government, the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, the Hon Jenny Aitchison MP, is taking an opportunity to be informed on, and further consider, the two packages of work on the Katoomba to Lithgow highway upgrades at Medlow Bath and Coxs River Road.</p> <p>TfNSW is working closely with the Minister to provide information on the planned upgrade works, including recent consultation with key community groups.</p>

	<p>Some activities have been temporarily paused as this discussion continues.</p> <p><b>Project contact:</b></p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 1800 953 777</p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au">gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au</a></p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="https://roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/great-western-highway/katoomba-to-lithgow/index.html">https://roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/great-western-highway/katoomba-to-lithgow/index.html</a></p>
<p><b>Dangerous goods on Coffs Harbour Bypass</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The type of dangerous goods allowed through the tunnels</li></ul>	<p>TfNSW is designing the Coffs Harbour bypass tunnels to meet safety requirements, to ensure the protection of motorists, workers and emergency service personnel responding to incidents. These safety measures would be required as part of the Coffs Harbour bypass design regardless of any policy on the transport of dangerous goods. A decision on type of dangerous goods that will be permitted to access the new tunnels as part of the bypass will be determined by the parties responsible for the decision-making, which will not rest solely with TfNSW.</p> <p><b>Project contact:</b></p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 1800 653 092</p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:pacific.highway@pacifichighway.com.au">pacific.highway@pacifichighway.com.au</a></p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.pacifichighway.nsw.gov.au">www.pacifichighway.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
<p><b>Newell Highway upgrade</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocating for duplication</li><li>• Action on the dip on new section of road at Whalan Creek</li><li>• Consistent traffic control across all road work sites</li><li>• Improved rest areas and more stopping opportunities.</li></ul>	<p>The Newell Highway Program Alliance is delivering about 40 additional overtaking lanes and various safety upgrades along the Newell Highway, within about four years.</p> <p>Inspection of the road section at Whalan Creek has taken place and have installed rough surface speed signs as a temporary measure. The site has been included in the forward works program.</p> <p>Whalan Creek Bridge has been inspected and tapered kerb extensions will be installed as part of the bridge maintenance program.</p> <p>Improved rest stopping opportunities are being investigated including recent engagement on upgrades to rest stops around Dubbo. TfNSW is developing a Heavy Vehicle Rest Improvement Strategic Business Case that will address gaps and deficiencies in the heavy vehicle rest stop network.</p>

	<p><b>Project contact:</b></p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 1800 741 636</p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au">newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au</a></p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="https://roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/newell-highway/index.html">https://roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/newell-highway/index.html</a></p>
<p><b>Primary producer concessions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Concern that with the loss of concessions, regulation is not clear, and farmers are at a disadvantage due to other operators taking advantage of the system.</li></ul>	<p>TfNSW is committed to continue providing registration concessions to primary producers.</p> <p>Legislation was passed in 2021 which changed the concession eligibility requirements. These changes were introduced to ensure that only genuine primary producers are granted the concession.</p> <p>The current eligibility requirement stipulates that all heavy vehicles receiving this concession must be used solely for primary producer business purposes.</p> <p>Increased penalties and new offences were also introduced, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>an increased penalty for corporations who attempt to register a vehicle by dishonest means</li><li>a new offence for individuals and corporations who 'obtain or attempt to obtain a vehicle registration concession by false statement, misrepresentation or other dishonest means'.</li></ul> <p>TfNSW continues to work with stakeholders to improve regulation of the concession. More information on the <a href="#">NSW Government website</a>.</p>



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