



The Hon. Andrew Constance MP
Minister for Transport and Roads
Leader of the House

Document tendered by <i>Peter Reson</i>
Received by <i>Liz Clark</i>
Date: <i>25 / 2 / 21</i>
Resolved to publish Yes / No

Mr Rodd Staples
Secretary
Transport for NSW
PO Box K659
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

By email:

Dear Mr Staples *Roddel*

Urgent: Road Access and Safety

In light of the recent catastrophic fires in NSW, I am writing to instruct you in your role as Secretary of Transport for NSW to establish a 'clearance zone' around all state managed highways, by ensuring trees within 40 metres either side cannot obstruct vital road access.

During the recent bushfire crisis in NSW, the Kings Highway – which serves as the main link between Canberra and the South Coast – was closed for significant periods of time. This was predominantly due to over 1200 bushfire affected trees that were deemed hazardous to safety and which had to be removed. I am aware that a team of up to 70 specialists were required to work around the clock in order to repair a 43km section of the road. Whilst I commend this effort, it may have reaped greater benefit if conducted prior to the bushfire crisis.

In January 2020, thousands of cars were queued on the Princes Highway from Milton to Ulladulla, with many evacuees waiting for over 10 hours to evacuate due to fallen trees and spot fires causing delays. Many were required to sleep in their cars, tired and hungry, many with small children – waiting for the road to re-open. In parts, evacuees encountering gridlocked traffic were only allowed to proceed with a police escort.

These are only two examples, although as you know, many state managed roads were closed across NSW. In Victoria, the defence force has been clearing trees either side of a 150km bushfire affected section of the Princes Highway, to ensure the community can get through safely.

It is vital that Transport for NSW ensures that measures are in place to provide clear pathways to safety for community members and emergency services vehicles.

I welcome any additional recommendations you may have to ensure that trees in particular do not obstruct roadways or access to safety during emergencies.

Yours sincerely

27/2/20

The Hon. Andrew Constance MP
Minister for Transport and Roads
Leader of the House