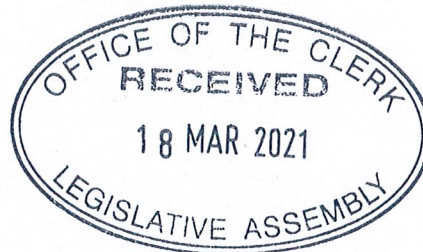




The Hon Paul Toole MP
Minister for Regional Transport and Roads

Our Ref: 01199469

Ms Helen Minnican
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Ms Minnican

I write in response to the petition lodged on 9 February 2021 by the Hon Shelley Hancock MP, regarding the preferred strategic corridor for the proposed Milton Ulladulla bypass.

Transport for NSW acknowledges the community campaign calling for reconsideration of alternative bypass corridors that extend further west and further south to bypass the townships of Burrill Lake and Lake Tabourie.

In 2019, the NSW and Australian governments committed \$1.5 billion to upgrade the Princes Highway from Nowra to the Victorian border, which includes detailed planning for a Milton Ulladulla bypass. In November 2019, the Australian Government announced it would fast-track its investment in the Princes Highway to bring forward project development and construction.

The Milton Ulladulla bypass would deliver safer and more reliable journeys between South Coast communities and ease congestion, especially at peak times, by removing the need for motorists to pass through 20 separate intersections.

Community consultation was held between 16 March and 13 April 2020. Consultation feedback helped to identify a range of bypass corridors during the strategic design and investigation phase, including bypass corridors that extended beyond Milton and Ulladulla.

Transport for NSW embarked on an extensive planning and development process including a value management workshop. Key local, state and federal government specialists assessed a range of design options against criteria before they made a recommendation for a preferred strategic corridor option. This resulted in identification of a preferred strategic corridor that broadly aligns with the existing bypass corridor gazetted in the Shoalhaven Local Environmental Plan 2014.

The project will undertake additional investigations and use community feedback from the latest round of consultation, which closed on the 14 February 2021, to further refine the design in the next phase of planning. More detail on the design features and potential location and type of connections from the bypass to the existing highway have yet to be determined.

Transport for NSW acknowledges that data collected between December 2019 and January 2020 did not reflect typical traffic conditions due to the bushfire emergency experienced in the region. This data has not been used in traffic modelling for the Milton Ulladulla bypass project.

Traffic data was collected by Transport for NSW and Shoalhaven City Council across a number of years. This information has been used in the traffic and transport assessment as part of the strategic investigation and design phase of the project. Additional traffic data, including monitoring of traffic volumes, intersection queue lengths and road use was collected over the recent 2020-21 peak summer holiday period and continued to mid-February 2021. This data will inform future planning for the Milton Ulladulla bypass and Burrill Lake to Batemans Bay upgrade projects.

The preferred strategic corridor, when compared with other shortlisted corridor options, was found to provide the best balance in achieving the benefits of the project and the Princes Highway upgrade program. When compared to the other options assessed, the preferred strategic corridor would:

- attract more traffic to the bypass during both weekday and peak holiday periods thereby removing a larger proportion of traffic including heavy vehicles from bypassed town centres;
- provide greater opportunities to connect to town centres, businesses and services, making day-to-day journeys more reliable throughout the community;
- provide opportunities to enhance the character and liveability of the area, support sustainable economic growth and improve safety for transport users; and
- have lower impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, including Meroo National Park and Burrill Lake.

Traffic modelling found that by 2041, the preferred strategic corridor for the Milton Ulladulla bypass would remove about 55 per cent of weekday traffic out of Milton and about 30 per cent of weekday traffic from Ulladulla. This would increase to a traffic reduction of over 55 per cent in Milton and about 40 percent in Ulladulla during peak holiday periods, which more than doubles the traffic reduction achieved by further western options.

The further western bypass corridors assessed were found to be constrained by a number of key environmental features. These corridors provided limited opportunities to connect to town centres and would reduce access to current and future land uses, including businesses. The lack of potential connections to local roads would make these corridor options less effective in reducing heavy vehicle volumes within town centres, limiting potential benefits to improve the safety, amenity and liveability in these areas.

Transport for NSW is committed to understanding the community's feedback and the consultation period for the preferred strategic corridor option, which opened on 25 November 2020, was extended by eight weeks to 14 February 2021.

The consultation achieved a significant response with over 2,000 submissions received. All feedback will be considered by Transport for NSW and a community consultation report will be prepared to address the issues raised by the community during the consultation period.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Toole". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'P'.

17/03/2021

THE HON PAUL TOOLE MP