

BUSINESS ILLAWARRA

11 March 2024

The Hon John Graham MLC
Minister for Roads
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister,

Submission to the Bulli bypass consultations

As the region's peak business membership organisation, Business Illawarra is pleased to provide this submission to the NSW Government's Bulli Bypass consultation process. We understand Transport for NSW (TfNSW) is investigating the extension of Memorial Drive to provide a bypass of the Bulli town centre and will also consider other transport improvements that could be made to improve safety, reduce congestion, and improve travel times and amenity within the Bulli area.

In 2018, Business Illawarra, in partnership with the National Roads and Motorists' Association (NRMA), funded a road connectivity [report](#) undertaken by Veitch Lister Consulting (VLC) that made the following five recommendations.

- **Recommendation 1:** Extend Memorial Drive to Bulli Pass, from its current interchange with the Princes Highway at Bulli.
- **Recommendation 2:** Examine the impact of heavy vehicles using Bulli Pass on road movements through Bulli and Thirroul.
- **Recommendation 3:** Provide a satisfactory parking solution to support local businesses if on street parking along the Princes Highway and Lawrence Hargrave Drive is impacted by measures to improve traffic flow.
- **Recommendation 4:** Consider whether increased public and active transport solutions will have a measureable mitigating impact on traffic flow.
- **Recommendation 5:** Facilitate improved access to the region for tourist traffic and examine the effect of weekend traffic, particularly along Grand Pacific Drive and Lawrence Hargrave Drive.

Further information regarding each is provided in the report and summarised below.

Recommendation 1: Extend Memorial Drive to Bulli Pass, from its current interchange with the Princes Highway at Bulli

Our report recommended that TfNSW investigate an extension of Memorial Drive to Bulli Pass from its current interchange with the Princes Highway at Bulli. The length of this extension would be around 2 km, depending on the route chosen, feasibly through the existing corridor or within the study area.¹

¹ Illawarra Business Chamber and NRMA, *Upgrading Road Connectivity Between the Illawarra and Greater Sydney*,

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Our research found that:

The Princes Highway through Bulli carries around 25,000 vehicles per day. During the morning peak period, it carries nearly 2,000 vehicles per hour, which is close to the hourly capacity of a road with two lanes in each direction interrupted by traffic lights and other intersections.

By 2031, there are expected to be over 31,000 vehicles passing through Bulli on the Princes Highway. Of these, around 17,000 vehicles are estimated to use Bulli Pass with approximately 11,000 vehicles travelling to and from Memorial Drive. Around 1,000 vehicles would use Bulli Pass each day to and from Lawrence Hargrave Drive.²

This research suggested that investigation of a Memorial Drive Extension should occur inside five years. This recommended timeframe (ie. 2023) has now passed so this work is now well overdue. The research notes that Memorial Drive contributes significantly to congestion in the streets around Woonona and Bulli, with a significant proportion of northbound traffic travelling to Bulli Pass. Consistent with the research findings, Business Illawarra considers a Memorial Drive Extension integral to improving the flow of traffic through Bulli, which would benefit traffic flow travelling south as well.³

Recommendation 2: Examine the impact of heavy vehicles using Bulli Pass on road movements through Bulli and Thirroul

Our research also acknowledges the impact of heavy vehicles banking up traffic along Bulli Pass. Undoubtedly this has flow on effect on traffic flow in the Northern Illawarra.

One option would be to preclude heavy vehicles from using Bulli Pass, instead requiring them to divert to Mount Ousley. However, with Mount Ousley set to reach peak daily capacity in 2026, and TfNSW not actively considering widening that road, this does not present as a viable alternative.

Heavy vehicles entering the Northern Illawarra will continue to impact traffic flow if Bulli Pass is not improved or a more efficient solution introduced in coming years.

Recommendation 3: Provide a satisfactory parking solution to support local businesses if on street parking along the Princes Highway and Lawrence Hargrave Drive is impacted by measures to improvements traffic flow.

Our research notes that:

Clearways can help manage congestion by allowing motorists to use all available lanes during peak periods. They could form part of a broader solution for Bulli and Thirroul.⁴

<http://www.nswbusinesschamber.com.au/NSWBC/media/Regional/Illawarra/ILWRA-to-GS-CONNECTIVITY-REPORT-FINAL-ELECTROINC-v2.pdf>, accessed 17 October 2019, p23.

² Ibid., p65.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Roads and Maritime Services, Frequently Asked Questions: Bulli and Thirroul Improvements.

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Business Illawarra is of the view that if TfNSW is to examine clearways as part of a broader solution for Bulli and Thirroul, then appropriate mitigating parking arrangements must accompany this change. Businesses in Bulli and Thirroul, particularly along the Princes Highway and Lawrence Hargrave Drive, are heavily reliant on parking along these arterial roads and surrounding streets; introducing clearways in isolation would have a detrimental impact on these businesses.

We acknowledge that a clearway would help manage congestion, and in turn would improve the amenity of the Bulli and Thirroul town centres. However, TfNSW should consider available land in the study area on which develop appropriate off street parking options if a clearway is introduced.

There may be an opportunity to better facilitate and encourage visitors to Thirroul to use the commuter carpark at Thirroul train station when visiting the town centre.

Recommendation 4: Consider whether increased public and active transport solutions will have a measureable mitigating impact on traffic flow.

Our research would question whether increased public transport services or active transport alternatives (i.e. walking or cycling) will have a measurable effect on car travel, and might in turn reduce business patronage if Bulli and Thirroul become more difficult to readily access. Rather, we see public and active transport solutions as means to improve the amenity of the Bulli, Thirroul and Austinmer town centres and as a complement to road traffic solutions. These options cannot reasonably be expected to replace car transport and the business community does not see public and active transport solutions as mitigating measures.

Recommendation 5: Facilitate improved access to the region for tourist traffic and examine the effect of weekend traffic, particularly along Grand Pacific Drive and Lawrence Hargrave Drive.

Our research also highlights the impact of traffic along Grand Pacific Drive and Lawrence Hargrave Drive – single lane roads into a residential area – and commented that:

Consideration should be given to appropriate parking arrangements in these areas to facilitate visits by tourists and lessen the impact on local residents.⁵

Business Illawarra notes the significant growth of the tourism sector and importance of tourists and day trippers from Greater Sydney to businesses operating in the Northern Illawarra. Improvements to facilitate access to the region for tourist traffic and minimise impact on locals is therefore necessary.

The above recommendations are based on sound research commissioned by Business Illawarra. All reports referenced in this submission are available on our website at businessillawarra.com/illawarra-policy-and-advocacy/advocacy-services-reports.

⁵ Illawarra Business Chamber and NRMA, *Upgrading Road Connectivity Between the Illawarra and Greater Sydney*, p43.

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If there are questions regarding this submission, please don't hesitate to contact me at any time at adam.zarth@businessillawarra.com or on 0404 146 829.

Yours sincerely,



Adam Zarth
Executive Director
Business Illawarra

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About Business Illawarra

Business Illawarra is the peak business organisation that supports businesses and local chambers across the Illawarra primarily, as well as the Shoalhaven, Southeast and Capital regions. Business Illawarra is non-profit organisation and a division of Business NSW (formerly the NSW Business Chamber) – a founding member of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

We develop policy and advocate to all levels of government on issues affecting businesses in our region, undertake research to guide greater public and private sector investment in economic infrastructure, and support the development of workforce capacity and skills.

Illawarra First is the peak leadership forum in the region, championing the interests of the local economy to unlock the region's enormous potential by harnessing best practice and thought leadership to progress key priorities.

Its membership comprises a select group of leading businesses in the Illawarra, sharing a commitment to bolster economic growth and prosperity. The leadership and direction of Illawarra First has driven the commissioning of research to support the policy and advocacy priorities of Business Illawarra.