



SHOROC Submission

Draft Sydney Clearways Strategy 2014

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1. Introduction & background

SHOROC is a partnership of Manly, Mosman, Pittwater & Warringah councils led by a Board of the council Mayors and General Managers. We collectively represent a population of 280,000 residents who contribute almost \$21 billion annually to the NSW economy.

Our region covers an area of approximately 288km² in north east Sydney and is characterised by its outstanding natural environment, vibrant community and large influx of tourists and weekend visitors.

Transport and traffic congestion are the number one issue for our residents and numerous studies have shown we have the slowest and most congested major roads in Sydney, if not Australia. In particular:

- The Pittwater/Spit/Military Road corridor is highlighted in the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan as the most congested in Sydney based on the volume/capacity ratio, and the second slowest morning peak hour commute of all the major corridors.
- The Warringah Road corridor is already beyond capacity through Forestville and the rest of the corridor, particularly the Wakehurst Parkway and Forest Road intersections, will exceed peak demand capacity by 2016 without any action.

2. Proposals or decisions on clearways must be consistent with the regional transport plan being developed in partnership with NSW Government

The councils have been working together for many years to address the traffic congestion issues and have conducted significant analysis of the options and constraints for improvement.

In 2010 the councils through SHOROC developed and all formally adopted the *Shaping Our Future* strategy to take the lead on integrated regional land-use and infrastructure planning by bringing together major directions for housing, employment, transport and health.

This regional strategy outlines the priority regional public transport and road improvements required. The major priorities are outlined in Tab A and include:

- Public transport: Construction of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) public transport system from Mona Vale to the CBD and from Dee Why to Chatswood.
- Targeted road upgrades: for Warringah Road, the Wakehurst Parkway, Mona Vale Road and construction of the Northern Beaches Link under Mosman.

SHOROC is working in partnership with our local NSW MPs, Transport for NSW and the Minister for Transport to develop an integrated plan to deliver on the transport needs of the Northern Beaches and Mosman.

It is critical that any proposals or decisions on clearways are consistent with and support this plan under development by Transport for NSW.

3. Comments regarding the priorities in the draft Sydney Clearways strategy

3.1 Proposed principles and approach

SHOROC generally supports the principles espoused in the draft Sydney Clearways Strategy. The principle of improving the road network and reduce congestion to improve travel times and reliability for public and private transport, whilst also balancing the need for improvement with the needs of local businesses, villages and residents is critical to any considerations regarding clearways proposals.

As with any proposal of this type the specific local consequences of any suggested change need to be assessed in detail and meaningfully considered before the most appropriate decision can be made.

3.2 Working together with councils

The proposal to consult with councils in investigating potential clearways is positive, particularly in meaningfully assessing any specific local consequences.

However the past approach of the RMS to “consultation” with councils needs to be improved significantly if there is to be confidence from councils and their communities in the RMS and the process. In the past this “consultation” has been more of an information dissemination exercise rather than what is widely recognised as true consultation as defined worldwide under the IAP2 framework for public participation (see <https://www.iap2.org.au/>).

Councils already work together and partner with the NSW Government on major transport issues and planning through SHOROC.

We propose this model be used to trial a more collaborative approach whereby the RMS works with a SHOROC regional transport group, with representatives from each of the four councils, on any identification of potential clearways for investigation, the investigation process and any decision to progress.

However the RMS is and should be the lead agency in this work. The process of assessing the clearway proposals and identifying and funding any solutions should be led by the RMS and conducted in conjunction with the councils in a meaningful manner as outlined above. The suggested approach of councils leading the assessment process and submitting funding bids for alternative parking arrangements is not appropriate. Ultimately the responsibility for mitigating any impacts on local villages and businesses is that of the RMS.

3.3 Proposed high priority projects

The approach of identifying and conducting pilot projects in the short term is supported.

The two priority projects identified that impact on this region are Lane Cove Road - North Ryde to Macquarie Park and Mona Vale Road - Pacific Highway West Pymble to St Ives.

SHOROC supports the principle of improving the road network and reducing congestion on this road corridor. However any investigation should be conducted in conjunction with the local council and it is critical before a decision is made regarding any next steps that there is meaningful consideration of the potential implications on local businesses, villages and residents.

3.4 Possible extensions to be further investigated

The draft Strategy identifies roads to be further investigated for clearway extensions, including for the SHOROC region the Pittwater/Spit/Military Rd corridor, Warringah Rd, Mona Vale Rd and Forest Way.

Whilst efforts to improve traffic flow on these corridors in line with the regional transport planning underway are generally supported, wholesale implementation without consideration of local impacts is not supported. Meaningful consideration of any local and regional impacts must be considered in detail in conjunction with councils before any plans are put in place for these corridors.

As outlined above SHOROC proposes the RMS lead a strategic assessment process in conjunction with a SHOROC regional transport group, with representatives from each of the four councils, on any identification of potential clearways for investigation, the investigation and any decision to progress.

Any changes proposed by the RMS must adhere to a policy of no net loss of parking and addressing local impacts as a fundamental requirement. Consideration should also be given to strategically and progressively planning any introduction such as considering alternative/ extended times for clearways.

3.5 Weekend clearways

Weekend traffic congestion is a significant issue for this region.

In considering clearways on weekends further detail is required regarding traffic flows and peak periods. For example traffic modelling through Dee Why suggests peak traffic flows on the weekend are between 10am and 2pm and as such blanket clearways or mirroring weekday clearways would likely not be effective.

3.6 Proposed parking framework and funding of alternative parking arrangements

The proposal to establish a framework for consideration of alternative parking and the majority of points under the framework are supported.

It is positive that the government is proposing to allocate funding to deliver alternative parking arrangements to mitigate the impacts of any clearway introduction. However it is not appropriate that councils be required to bid for funding and unacceptable that the costs for addressing the issues caused by the RMS introducing clearways be borne by councils. These major road corridors and city-wide transport are the responsibility of the NSW Government and if there are any impacts to be addressed by measures to alleviate congestion caused by past underinvestment in transport infrastructure these should be borne by the NSW Government, not councils and their local communities.

The approach to consult with local councils is also supported. However as outlined above (3.2):

- It must be meaningful consultation as defined by the IAP2 framework for public participation (see <https://www.iap2.org.au/>).
- The RMS is and should be the lead agency assessing the clearway proposals and identifying and funding any solutions in conjunction with the councils
- We propose an approach whereby the RMS works with a SHOROC regional transport group, with representatives from each of the four councils, on any identification of potential clearways for investigation, the investigation process and any decision to progress.

Further information

For more information visit the SHOROC website www.shoroc.com or contact SHOROC:

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Tab A: The solutions in the short-term and medium-to-long-term

Manly, Mosman, Pittwater and Warringah councils (SHOROC) consider the integrated package of priority transport improvements for the short-term and the medium-to-long-term for the SHOROC region to be as follows:

Short-term (0-5 years) package of measures

- A fast Bus Rapid Transit system on the north-south corridor from Mona Vale to the CBD, via a median bus lane using tidal flow arrangements in peak hour. Establishing this BRT would incorporate Spit Bridge augmentation as recommended by Infrastructure NSW and the median bus lane may come into operation only south of Manly Vale or even the Spit where no further stops are required to minimise operational issues.
- Grade separation at the intersections of Warringah Road with Wakehurst Parkway and Forest Way and upgrades to Wakehurst Parkway to provide flood-free access, critical to the construction of the Northern Beaches Hospital at Frenchs Forest.
- Fast public transport links from Dee Why to Chatswood, with an initial focus on the provision of frequent and direct Express Bus services and bus priority measures as outlined in the BRT pre-feasibility report including works to address the capacity issues at the Forest Way/Warringah Rd intersection. These bus priority measures could potentially include a T3 lane rather than a 24hr bus lane on the road corridor to reduce the impact on car traffic.
- Construction of targeted park & rides to maximise patronage of public transport.
- Detailed regional transport planning in partnership with the councils to maximise the efficiency of the network and seek to manage demand and promote alternative transport.
- Implementation of the proposed bus network rationalisation including the new tiered network structure and associated frequency improvements. This new network structure should cover the entire region and integrate the bus network of the Warringah Rd and Mona Vale Road corridors with the Pittwater/Spit/Military Road corridor into a single public transport network.
- Mona Vale Road upgrade to a divided dual-lane carriageway for its full length through to Mona Vale to improve safety and efficiency, and enable Warriewood/Ingleside growth.

Medium-long term (5-20 years) package of measures

- Upgrading of the public transport links from Dee Why to Chatswood from Express Buses to a segregated BRT and potentially light rail or other greater capacity transport in future years as needed. It is noted that implementation of a median or kerbside BRT is proposed as the next stage in implementation of bus priority works on this corridor.
- The proposed Northern Beaches Link, from the Gore Hill Freeway to the Burnt Bridge Creek Deviation via a tunnel under Mosman and a new bridge over the Spit, combined with the BRT from the Northern Beaches to the CBD. This Link could be fast-tracked with private sector involvement and SHOROC welcomes the work of Infrastructure NSW in engaging with the private sector on the feasibility of its acceleration.
- A new underground Neutral Bay interchange for the Spit/Military Road BRT line to also serve buses from Sydney's North West, linking to a metro-style rapid transit service to Wynyard that travel across the Harbour Bridge and under Wynyard using the redundant tram tunnels.

Major infrastructure priorities and directions for housing & employment

(source: Shaping Our Future, SHOROC. 2010)

