

Submissions snapshot

Exhibition of Tomaree National Park Draft Plan of Management Amendment and Draft Tomaree Coastal Walk Strategy



Background

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is working with the community to deliver the Tomaree Coastal Walk, a 20-kilometre walk from Tomaree Head to Birubi with new and improved visitor facilities in Tomaree National Park.

The project is funded by the NSW Government to increase nature-based tourism in New South Wales, boost regional visitor economies and improve community wellbeing.

To enable the delivery of the project, the Tomaree National Park Plan of Management (2006) required an update. The draft Amendment and the draft Tomaree Coastal Walk Strategy were exhibited for review and comment in 2019.

A total of 137 submissions were received from a broad range of stakeholders. The Minister for Energy and Environment reviewed the proposal, submissions received and the advice of NPWS and its statutory advisory bodies before jointly adopting the Amendment with the Minister for Water. View the [Tomaree National Park Plan of Management Amendment](#).

This summary outlines the main issues raised in submissions and changes made following the review. It does not provide an exhaustive report on submissions.

Why did we need to amend the Tomaree National Park Plan of Management?

The amendment is an important first step in the planning process for the Tomaree Coastal Walk project.

Parts of the coastal walk were identified in the Tomaree National Park Plan of Management adopted in 2006, however an amendment to the plan was required to enable the walk over its full length.

The next stage for the project is the preparation of the Tomaree Coastal Walk draft master plan, which will be consistent with the plan of management amendment.

The master plan will provide a framework and conceptual designs for the Tomaree Coastal Walk and future visitor facility improvements in Tomaree National Park.

The master plan will be informed by public feedback received on the draft amendment and Draft Tomaree Coastal Walk Strategy, geotechnical and engineering assessments and the Review of Environmental Factors (environmental assessment).

The draft master plan will replace the draft Tomaree Coastal Walk Strategy and will be exhibited in 2020.

We value your input

We appreciate everyone's ongoing interest in the project and have been engaging with the community and other stakeholders about the project in the following ways:


- [Tomaree Coastal Walk webpage](#) and online register.
- Project progress updates to stakeholders.
- Meetings with the Tomaree Coastal Walk Reference Group involving representatives from 12 local groups and organisations.
- Tourism and visitor research and market sounding.
- Ongoing meetings and discussions with key stakeholder groups and organisations.
- Exhibition of the Tomaree National Park Draft Plan of Management Amendment and Draft Tomaree Coastal Walk Strategy, 2 August to 30 September 2019.
- Community open-house information session on 25 September 2019. Over 25 people attended.
- Consultation with NPWS statutory advisory bodies including the Hunter Central Coast Branch Regional Advisory Committee and NPWS Advisory Council.

What you told us

We received a total of 137 submissions on the draft Amendment and Draft Tomaree Coastal Walk Strategy from a range of stakeholders including local residents and business operators, other NSW Government agencies, local government, non-government organisations.

The submissions addressed a wide range of issues that have been summarised under the following key themes:

Key themes raised in submissions

| | Number of submissions |
|---|-----------------------|
|  Support for rock climbing | 46 |
|  General support for project | 33 |
|  Impacts to residents | 27 |
|  Change of park's character, possible loss of solitude | 26 |
|  Traffic management and supporting infrastructure | 17 |
|  Helicopter landings on Fingal Island | 16 |
|  Commercialisation of the park | 16 |

How submissions were analysed

All submissions were recorded, the points raised in submissions analysed, and a decision made about how to group points into themes. Points and themes were then considered against criteria to see if a change to the plan was needed. This process is outlined below.

Analysis of submissions



- Every point raised in every submission is documented and considered carefully.
- Similar points are grouped together in themes according to either:
 1. section of the plan
 2. specific issue.
- Themes and their points are assessed using criteria to determine whether or not a change should be made to the plan.

Summary of issues raised

Submissions were well considered offering constructive input on where the proposal may be improved. Here's some of what people had to say:

Support for rock climbing

Some submissions supported rock-climbing on Tomaree Head given its history as a climbing destination. Some submitters also expressed a desire to work with NPWS to develop a rock climbing code of conduct.

General support for the project

Some submissions provided support for the project including nature-based tourism and experiences, appreciation for the linking of currently disjunct trails and acknowledgment that improving the tracks' standard was necessary to minimise environmental impacts.

Impacts on residents

Some submissions were concerned about the walk's proximity to houses, litter, visitor behaviour and parking.

Change of park's character

Some submissions were concerned about a loss of the park's character and visual and environmental impacts of the proposed track, including the route from Tomaree Head to Fingal Bay. The potential loss of the sense of remoteness and solitude was also raised.

Traffic management and supporting infrastructure

Some submissions were concerned about congestion in Nelson Bay area, inadequate car parking, environmental impacts of new car parks and identified the need for the walk to be supported by public transport.

Helicopter landings on Fingal Island

Submissions on this issue were concerned about the necessity of the proposal, flight paths and potential impacts to wildlife and the community.

Commercialisation of the park

Some submissions were concerned that regional growth would be at the expense of resident and visitor experience and environmental values.

How has NPWS responded to issues?

We thank everyone who submitted comments on the draft plans. In response to the submissions, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and its statutory advisory bodies, considered where changes could be made to revise the proposal, improving outcomes for visitors and for the parks natural and cultural heritage values.

The following points describe where changes were made and outlines reasoning where changes were not made. Not every argument made, or point raised, in submissions lead to changes.

Rock climbing

NPWS removed restrictions on rock climbing at Tomaree Head from the plan of management, subject to a rock climbing code of conduct to manage safety and environmental issues in the park.

Impacts on residents

The concerns of residents and other stakeholders will be further considered as part of the ongoing planning for the project.

Change of the park's character

NPWS considers that while activity may increase in particular areas in the park, much of the track is already in place and proposed new track sections will retain the character of the landscape. The project aims to better manage future visitation demand in the park.

Helicopter landings on Fingal Island

Helicopter landings on Fingal Island are already permitted in the plan of management with consent by NPWS, which will consider factors such as flight paths, impacts on wildlife, residents and visitors.

Traffic management and supporting infrastructure

NPWS are working with the council and other stakeholders to address traffic and parking impacts.

Commercialisation of the park

The Tomaree Coastal Walk is being delivered in consultation and will be sympathetic with local concerns and the environment. The proposal attempts provide a balance between conserving the park's natural and cultural heritage and recreational and commercial use.



Photo: The rocky shoreline in Tomaree National Park (John Spencer/DPIE)



Photo: Bushwalking fun in Tomaree National Park (Destination NSW/DPIE)

Next steps

The Tomaree National Park Plan of Management Amendment is published on the [NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website](#).

The next steps in the project include the preparation of the draft master plan, draft Review of Environmental Factors (environmental assessment) and draft interpretation strategy for the walk.

The draft master plan will replace the draft Tomaree Coastal Walk Strategy and will be informed by geotechnical and engineering assessments, the Review of Environmental Factors and community and stakeholder feedback.

The master plan will provide a framework and conceptual designs for the Tomaree Coastal Walk and future visitor facility improvements in Tomaree National Park.

While not all improvements in the draft master plan can be delivered as part of the Tomaree Coastal Walk project funding, the draft plan provides long-term visitor facility planning for the park, pending further funding.

The priority for delivery is the 20-kilometre Tomaree Coastal Walk connecting Tomaree Head to Birubi Point. Further detailed costing, feasibility and assessments will determine what will be constructed.

The draft master plan and draft Review of Environmental Factors will be available for public comment in 2020. We will advise you when the exhibition commences.

Anyone who has not yet registered their interest in the project can do so on the [Tomaree Coastal Walk webpage](#).



More information

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