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**Frequently Asked Questions**

The Tomaree Coastal Walk draft master plan and draft Review of Environmental Factors will be on exhibition for public consultation from **22 September – 20 October 2020.**

We invite community and stakeholder feedback on the draft plans to ensure the best outcome for Tomaree National Park and the community.

1. **What does the Tomaree Coastal Walk draft master plan provide?**

The Tomaree Coastal Walk draft master plan provides a framework and conceptual designs for the delivery of the Tomaree Coastal Walk from Tomaree Head to Birubi Point, and future visitor facility improvements in Tomaree National Park.

The draft master plan provides:

* An overview and conceptual designs for the $6.7 million Tomaree Coastal Walk with maps showing the indicative route of the 20-kilometre walking track planned to connect Tomaree Head to Birubi Point.
* Concepts for supporting initiatives and facility upgrades to enhance the experience, improve visitor management and meet future visitation demands. This includes proposed upgrades, concept designs and artist impressions for:
* Tomaree Head precinct
* Box Beach precinct
* Big Rocky precinct
* Iris Moore precinct.

Proposed improvements include new and upgraded walking tracks, viewing platforms, parking, interpretation, amenities and other visitor facilities.

The Tomaree Lodge site is not part of Tomaree National Park and is outside the scope of this project.

A short video has been produced to provide an overview of the draft master plan and consultation opportunity <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3tPgHFb4Q4&feature=youtu.be>

1. **What was considered in developing the draft master plan?**

The plan has been informed by extensive geotechnical, engineering, environmental and cultural assessments, tourism market research and community feedback received on Tomaree National Park Plan of Management draft amendment and the draft Tomaree Coastal Walk Strategy.

The draft master plan was prepared by [Turf Design](http://www.turfdesign.com) in collaboration with National Parks and Wildlife Service and other stakeholders.

1. **What is the priority for delivery?**

While not all improvements proposed 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, should further funding become available.

The priority for delivery is the 20-kilometre Tomaree Coastal Walk connecting Tomaree Head to Birubi Point with associated facilities. Further detailed costing, feasibility, assessments and evaluations will determine what will be constructed as part of the $6.74 million NSW Government funding. We will continue to provide updates on the project’s progress.

1. **What does the draft Review of Environmental Factors provide?**

The draft Review of Environmental Factors assesses the environmental and cultural significance of the area and likely environmental impacts of the proposal, identifying measures to mitigate adverse impacts. The REF informed the preparation of the draft master plan.

The Review of Environmental Factors was prepared by independent contractors NGH, in consultation with NPWS and other stakeholders.

NPWS is the proponent and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment’s Biodiversity and Conservation Division is the determining authority for this activity under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. The REF helps the determining authority to decide whether an activity should be approved and assists in the development of appropriate conditions should approval be given

The draft master plan and draft Review of Environmental Factors are being exhibited together to provide people with a clearer understanding of the Tomaree Coastal Walk project and the necessary information to enable feedback. People are invited to comment on both plans.

1. **Where can people see a copy of the draft plans?**

Copies are available for viewing at the following locations:

* Online at www.engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/consult
* Tomaree Library and Community Centre, 7 Community Close, Salamander Bay, NSW

1. **Will there an opportunity to discuss the draft plans with NPWS during the exhibition?**

Yes. NPWS will be offering COVID safe information sessions on **Saturday 10 October 2020** to provide an opportunity for the people to meet with the project team and discuss the draft plans. We can also offer phone or online sessions to further minimise COVID risk. The sessions are by booking only. Call the NPWS Nelson Bay office on **02 4984 8200.**

Local community groups and organisations and other stakeholders are also being briefed on the draft plans during the exhibition.

1. **How can people comment on the draft plans?**

Public exhibition is from **22 September – 20 October 2020**.

Anyone is invited to make a written submission on the draft plans which can be viewed at https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/consult.

Submissions need to be received by **Tuesday 20 October 2020.** You can provide your written submission in one of the following ways:

use the online submission form at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/consult](https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/community-engagement/walking-tracks-and-trails-in-national-parks/tomaree-coastal-walk/tomaree-coastal-walk-draft-master-plan-and-draft-review-of-environmental-factors)

email your submission to [npws.huntercentralcoastbranch@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:npws.huntercentralcoastbranch@environment.nsw.gov.au)

post your submission to the Director NPWS Hunter Central Coast Branch, PO Box 488G, Newcastle NSW 2124.

##### **When will the draft plans be finalised and implemented?**

The draft master plan and draft Review of Environmental Factors will be available for public comment until **Tuesday 20 October 2020**. The plans will be finalised once community and stakeholder feedback has been considered.

The master plan may be adjusted to meet issues raised during the exhibition, environmental and cultural assessment outcomes and local design issues, and still must meet the requirements of the Tomaree Plan of Management and amendment.

A ‘Submission snapshot’ summary will be provided to advise people of the outcomes of the consultation on the draft plans.

The final Tomaree Coastal Walk master plan and Review of Environmental Factors will be displayed:

Online at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/tomareecoastalwalk](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/tomareecoastalwalk)

NPWS Nelson Bay office, 12B Teramby Road, Nelson Bay, NSW, 2315

1. **What are the next steps in the project?**

The next stage of the project is detailed design and assessment for the construction of the $6.7 million Tomaree Coastal Walk connecting Tomaree Head with Birubi Point. We inform you of what is being delivered as part of the Tomaree Coastal Walk funding.

Construction will be subject to rigorous environmental and heritage approvals prior to commencing. This includes consideration under the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the NSW Heritage Act 1977 and the Commonwealth Environmental Planning and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. The final master plan and delivery will be consistent with the amended Tomaree National Park Plan of Management.

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service will deliver the project in stages with construction expected to commence in 2021.

1. **How can people stay updated on the progress?**

##### For more information about the Tomaree Coastal Walk project or to register your interest to receive project updates, visit the Tomaree Coastal Walk webpage at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/tomareecoastalwalk](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/tomareecoastalwalk)

**About the Tomaree Coastal Walk**

1. **What will the project involve?**

The $6.74 million Tomaree Coastal Walk project will deliver a spectacular 20-kilometre walking track from Tomaree Head to Birubi Point including a significant upgrade to the Tomaree Head precinct, new and upgraded walking tracks, viewing platforms, interpretation and other visitor facilities in Tomaree National Park.

The project will cater for a range of visitor experiences from short walks to half or multi-day options and provide opportunities for commercial tourism partnerships. For more information visit [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/tomareecoastalwalk](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/tomareecoastalwalk).

1. **What is the project’s aim?**

The project aims to deliver immersive nature-based visitor experiences for Port Stephens, promote the outstanding natural and cultural heritage of Tomaree National Park, better manage park visitation and boost the regional visitor economy.

1. **How was the project funded?**

In 2018, the Tomaree Coastal Walk project received $6.74 million in funding over four years as part of an unprecedented $80 million investment by the NSW Government in nine visitor infrastructure projects, to strengthen the appeal of NSW as a nature-based destination, promote the values of national parks and improve local visitor economies.

The visitor infrastructure projects aim to significantly enhance visitor facilities and create new iconic experiences in NSW national parks including new walking trails, accommodation and tourism partnerships.

1. **What is the timeframe for the delivery of the Tomaree Coastal Walk?**

The project will be delivered in stages with construction to commence in 2021.

**Phase 1 (2018):** Planning & initial consultation

**Phase 2 (2019):** Planning and public exhibition of Tomaree National Park Plan of Management – Draft Amendment – Coastal Walk and Visitor Experience Improvements

**Phase 3 (2020)**: Detailed planning, extensive environmental assessments, concept design and public consultation on the draft master plan and draft Review of Environmental Factors

**Phase 4 (2021):** Construction commences

**Phase 5 (TCB):** Launch

1. **What work has been completed so far?**

The project is in the planning and assessment phase including geo-technical and engineering investigations, visitor experience development, master plan design, environmental and heritage assessments and community and stakeholder engagement.

The project team have met with key stakeholder groups and individuals across Port Stephens, including the Worimi community, local community groups, residents, council and tourism organisations. Further briefings will be held during the exhibition of the draft plans.

We’ve also undertaken tourism market research to understand potential and current visitor use and demand, and ensure the project maximises visitor experience opportunities.

1. **Will visitors be able to access the park during construction?**

Construction of the walk will be undertaken in stages, and where possible outside peak holiday times, to minimise disruption to the local community, visitors and businesses. To enable the safe completion of the work, it is expected that sections of the park will be temporarily closed during construction. Stakeholders, including the local community and commercial tour operators currently using the park will be notified in advance of any temporary closures.

1. **Does this project include the Tomaree Lodge site?**

No. The Tomaree Lodge site is not part of Tomaree National Park and is outside the scope of this project.

1. **How will park values be protected?**

National parks are managed to protect their unique values and provide for sustainable visitor use and enjoyment. This includes providing visitor experiences and, where appropriate, new visitor facilities including tracks and trails. Every effort will be made to minimise the impact of the walking track and associated visitor facilities.

The draft master plan was informed by the draft Review of Environmental Factors (REF). The REF assesses the environmental and cultural significance of the project area and likely environmental impacts of the proposal, identifying measures to mitigate adverse impacts.

The project will undergo further detailed design and assessment to ensure compliance with the park’s plan of management and conservation management plans. Further stringent environmental, cultural heritage and built heritage assessments, by involving our staff, key stakeholders and other experts, will ensure the project meets environmental, cultural and economic requirements.

1. **How will community values be protected?**

The guiding principles for developing the walk ensures the walk is compatible with the park and local environment and provides a nature-based experience in line with the Tomaree National Park Plan of Management and amendment, environmental assessment and visitor research.

The walking track will be kept as much as possible on national park estate, with track design to avoid stopping or congregating adjacent to houses.

The draft master plan identifies an indicative ‘route corridor’ and the location of the track will be refined following the detailed design stage involving further environmental and cost feasibility assessments.

Market sounding and visitor research have guided track layout. Findings promote the walking track to focus on coastline and ocean views.

1. **What opportunities will there be for commercial operators/local business?**

NPWS will continue to work with the tourism industry and local operators to maximise commercial partnerships provided by the visitor improvements.

1. **Will mountain bikes have access to the walk and new facilities?**

Mountain bike riding opportunities will continue to be provided on management trails in Tomaree National Park, in line with the existing plan of management. Visitor experience improvements including carparking, interpretation and other facilities can also be enjoyed by mountain bikers.

1. **How will the walk effect access in Tomaree National Park?**

NPWS is consulting a range of commercial and recreational users, to ensure the proposed walk complements existing legal activities in the park. Opportunities for mobility impaired and wheelchair access will be investigated.

For more information about the project people can visit [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/tomareecoastalwalk](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/tomareecoastalwalk) or email [npws.huntercoastarea@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:npws.huntercoastarea@environment.nsw.gov.au)