Case Study Series 2026

# Warringah Freeway Upgrade Alfred Street off Ramp Closure Community Consultation to Enable a Major Temporary Traffic Change with Significant Stakeholder Disruption

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# 1.0 KEY PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The project team developed an ambitious proposal to close a major freeway southbound off ramp for around 8 months, the last off ramp before the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The Alfred Street off ramp had only been approved to be closed for short-term periods at night or over the weekend previously. Closing the off ramp for 8 months was ambitious, however, provided many benefits.

Community benefits:

- Reducing the construction scope duration, allowing work during standard day work shifts instead of limited night work shifts, up to 10 per month, and on weekends.
- Reducing night time and weekend construction impacts. Completing the work scope during standard day work shifts meant removing the high noise night time and weekend shifts associated with the work scope.
- Reduced the overall duration of construction on the community, bringing forward the scope completion date by 6 months.

Construction benefits:

- Cost reduction associated with numerous temporary traffic set ups, night time and weekend traffic control personnel, reducing the number of construction stages associated with the work package.

The project adopted a structured, high-influence engagement methodology designed to actively inform how the works were planned and delivered. This approach moved beyond communication to genuine collaboration, enabling stakeholders and the community to shape key decisions, mitigate impacts and support the safe and efficient delivery of the project.

At its core, the methodology was built on three principles: early engagement to inform the construction team during the planning process, targeted engagement to address specific impacts, and responsive engagement to adapt to emerging challenges in real time.

The construction, traffic and community teams closely collaborated to build trust with diverse stakeholder groups, proactively manage community concerns, and ensure local needs and expectations were considered throughout project planning and delivery. Through strategic engagement, targeted communications, consultation, and issue resolution, we strengthened the project's reputation and achieved the delivery of positive social, community, and project outcomes.

# 2.0 ENGAGEMENT SCOPE

To ensure that the outcome of consultation was shaped by those most affected, the project team implemented a targeted engagement campaign designed to test community sentiment and identify the conditions required for stakeholder acceptance. Rather than presenting a predetermined solution, the team adopted a genuine co-design approach, actively seeking feedback on the proposed closure, understanding community priorities, and inviting stakeholders to influence the mitigation measures that would allow the affected stakeholders to support and adapt to the traffic change.

The response was unprecedented. The campaign generated 1,488 survey responses, representing the highest level of community participation recorded throughout the project and significantly exceeding engagement levels achieved through previous consultations, including parking and access surveys. This demonstrated both the importance of the issue to the community and the success of the project's engagement approach in building awareness, trust and participation.

To maximise reach and ensure all potentially affected stakeholders had an opportunity to contribute, the team delivered a comprehensive, multi-channel engagement program that included:

- Direct email communications to approximately 6,000 project subscribers in the affected area
- Letterbox drops to approximately 10,000 residential and business properties
- On-street signage featuring QR codes linking directly to the survey
- Face-to-face community information sessions at the project's Community Information Centre and within the affected area
- Targeted briefings with transport operators, including local bus companies
- Direct engagement with local schools, businesses and key community stakeholders

Analysis of the community feedback identified clear community concerns, particularly regarding changed access arrangements and the introduction of toll costs associated with alternative travel routes. Rather than viewing these concerns as barriers, the project team worked collaboratively with stakeholders, including the Transport for NSW (TfNSW), to co-design practical and equitable solutions that addressed community needs while maintaining project objectives.

This collaboration resulted in the development of the first-ever toll reimbursement scheme for residents using the closest alternative southbound off ramp, the Falcon Street/Military Road off-ramp. The project team were able to mitigate the costs being incurred by residents who used the tolled off ramp as an alternative access during the closure of the not tolled Alfred Street southbound off ramp.

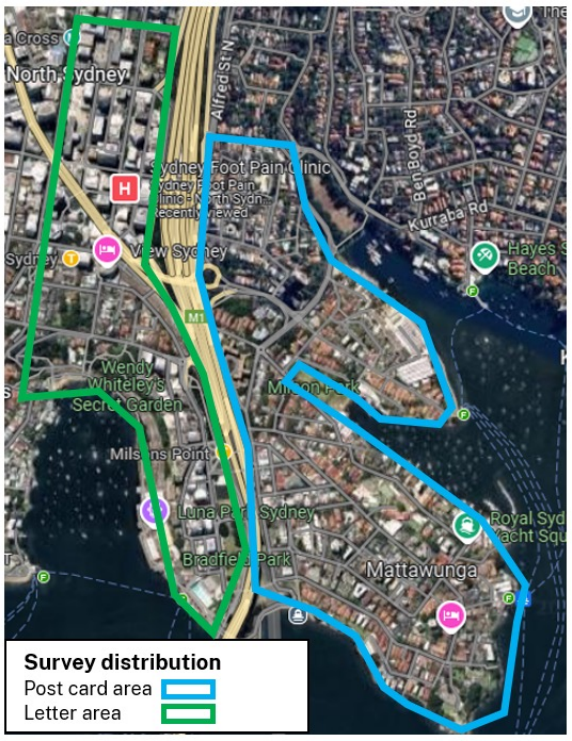
The initiative ensured that community members were not financially disadvantaged by the proposed access changes and demonstrated the project's commitment to delivering fair, stakeholder-informed outcomes.

In parallel, the team developed a bespoke business engagement strategy to support local economic resilience throughout the closure period. Tailored business continuity packs were co-designed with affected businesses to directly address issues identified through consultation, including customer access, wayfinding, communication materials and promotional opportunities. By responding to business-specific needs and incorporating stakeholder feedback into the final approach, the project was able to minimise disruption, maintain accessibility and strengthen relationships with the local business community.

This stakeholder-led approach transformed a potentially contentious access change into a collaboratively developed solution, achieving record levels of participation, introducing industry-leading mitigation measures, and demonstrating how meaningful engagement can directly influence project outcomes and build lasting community trust.

## Engagement timeline

| Item. | Date | Activity | Description | Status | Owner |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 16 October to 23 October | Survey / corflutes | Preliminary survey for residents , businesses and schools of lower north shore of upcoming traffic changes and expected impacts. Part of an ongoing engagement process for the "hot spot" area of impact. Outcomes will be available online. | In draft | CPBDTI |
| 1 | 16 to 23 October | Bus operators / TTLG | This will provide initial feedback that can be used to help prepare for mitigations offer, how to manage impacts and will be provided to CJP to help CJP continue TMP approval. | Ongoing | CPBDTI/TfNSW |
| 2 | 23 October | Community notification | Providing overview of works planned specifically traffic impacts and benefits. | In draft | CPBDTI |
| 3 | 25 October | Media Q&A and holding statements prepared | • Q&As and holding lines provided in preparation of potential media enquiries | In draft | TfNSW |
| 4 | 25 October | Targeted comms | • Corflutes<br>• Social media post<br>• LiveTraffic SMS updates<br>• VMS<br>• Emergency services | In draft | TfNSW/CPBDTI |
| 5 | 25 October | Bray St meeting | Review actions from previous meeting and present program for next 18 months. | TBC | CPBDTI |
| 6 | From 25 October | Final push comms campaign | • Email blasts<br>• Direct emails<br>• Social media<br>• Radio announcement<br>• Mitigations (as required) | In draft | CPBDTI/TfNSW |
| 7 | 1 November | Implementation | | | |



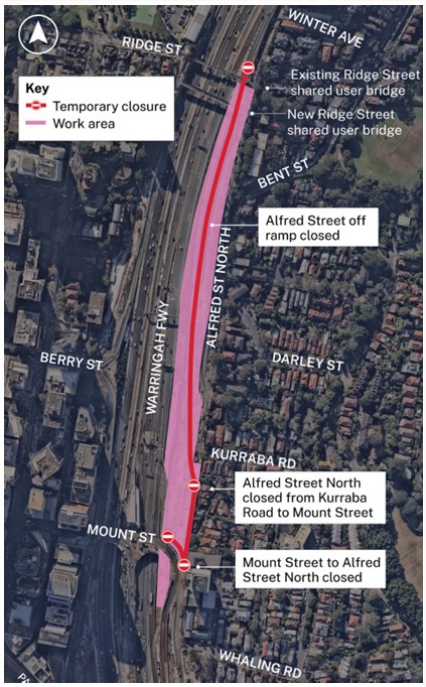
# 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This engagement process fundamentally shifted decision-making within Transport for NSW's Operational Planning function. For the first time, approval of the Alfred Street off-ramp closure, along with all associated traffic management plans, was contingent upon demonstrated community and business support. As a result, the engagement team played a critical role in gathering and analysing stakeholder insights that directly informed and influenced the final decision.

The consultation generated 1,488 survey responses, representing the highest level of community participation recorded across the project and significantly exceeding previous engagement initiatives, including the Project Development and Local Place (PDLP) program, parking surveys and Ridge Street Bridge access consultations. This unprecedented response rate provided a robust and statistically significant evidence base for decision-makers, highlighting the community's willingness to engage when offered genuine opportunities to influence project outcomes.

Community feedback was systematically assessed alongside traffic modelling, operational monitoring and technical investigations, ensuring stakeholder perspectives were given equal consideration within the decision-making framework. This integrated approach strengthened the credibility of the assessment process and enabled a more balanced outcome that reflected both operational requirements and community expectations.

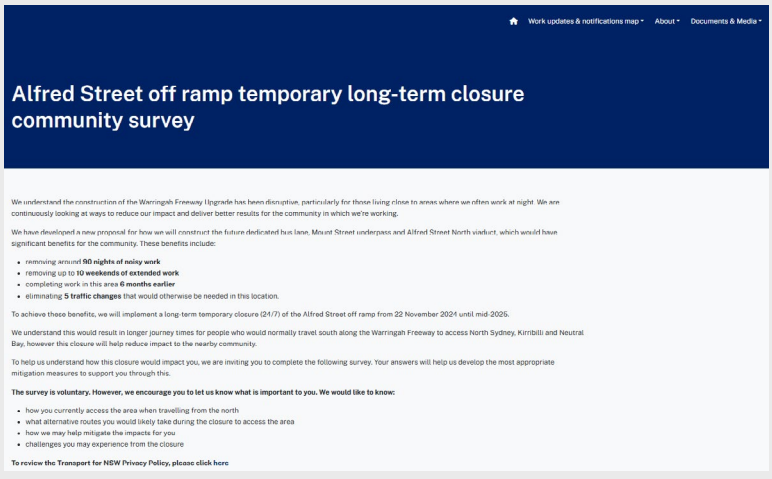
Ultimately, the closure strategy was refined and implemented with a level of community understanding and acceptance that would not have been achievable without this depth of engagement. The process demonstrated a clear and measurable link between stakeholder input and project outcomes, with community feedback directly shaping both the final decision and the mitigation measures adopted to reduce impacts. The initiative established a new benchmark for community-led decision-making on the project, showcasing how meaningful engagement can build trust, improve outcomes and secure social licence for complex infrastructure delivery.



## Community Consultation website and community feedback survey

View the survey here:

Have your say: Alfred Street Off ramp eight-month closure | Warringah Freeway Upgrade | Transport for NSW (RMS)



Work updates & notifications map · About · Documents & Media

# Alfred Street off ramp temporary long-term closure community survey

We understand the construction of the Warringah Freeway Upgrade has been disruptive, particularly for those living close to areas where we often work at night. We are continuously looking at ways to reduce our impact and deliver better results for the community in which we're working.

We have developed a new proposal for how we will construct the future dedicated bus lane, Mount Street underpass and Alfred Street North viaduct, which would have significant benefits for the community. These benefits include:

- removing around **90 nights of noisy work**
- removing up to **10 weekends of extended work**
- completing work in this area **6 months earlier**
- eliminating **5 traffic changes** that would otherwise be needed in this location.

To achieve these benefits, we will implement a long-term temporary closure (24/7) of the Alfred Street off ramp from 22 November 2024 until mid-2025.

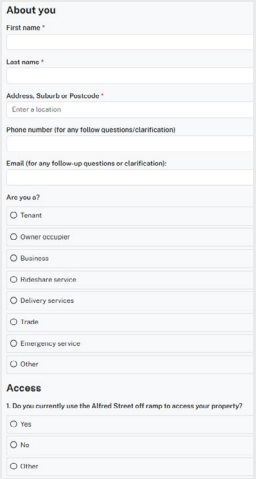
We understand this would result in longer journey times for people who would normally travel south along the Warringah Freeway to access North Sydney, Kirribilli and Neutral Bay, however this closure will help reduce impact to the nearby community.

To help us understand how this closure would impact you, we are inviting you to complete the following survey. Your answers will help us develop the most appropriate mitigation measures to support you through this.

**The survey is voluntary. However, we encourage you to let us know what is important to you. We would like to know:**

- how you currently access the area when travelling from the north
- what alternative routes you would likely take during the closure to access the area
- how we may help mitigate the impacts for you
- challenges you may experience from the closure

**To review the Transport for NSW Privacy Policy, please click here**



**About you**

First name *

Last name *

Address, Suburb or Postcode *

Enter a location

Phone number (for any follow questions/clarification)

Email (for any follow-up questions or clarification):

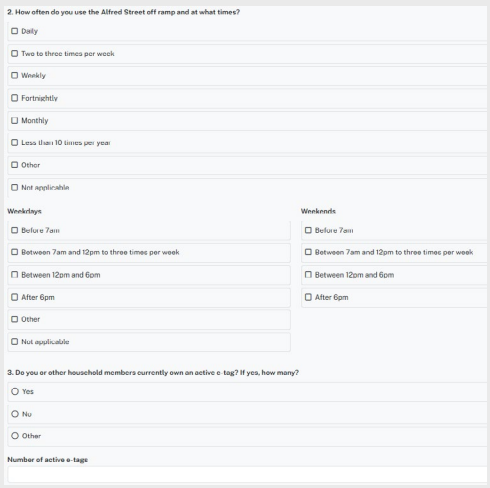
Are you a?

- Tenant
- Owner occupier
- Business
- Rideshare service
- Delivery services
- Trade
- Emergency service
- Other

**Access**

1. Do you currently use the Alfred Street off ramp to access your property?

- Yes
- No
- Other



2. How often do you use the Alfred Street off ramp and at what times?

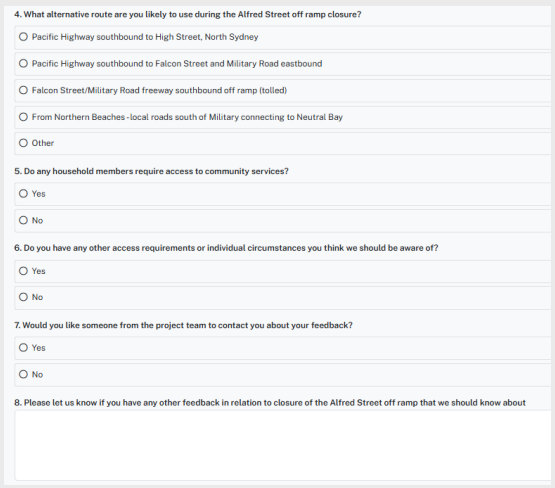
- Daily
- Two to three times per week
- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Less than 10 times per year
- Other
- Not applicable

| Weekdays | Weekends |
|---|---|
| Before 7am | Before 7am |
| Between 7am and 12pm to three times per week | Between 7am and 12pm to three times per week |
| Between 12pm and 6pm | Between 12pm and 6pm |
| After 6pm | After 6pm |
| Other | |
| Not applicable | |

3. Do you or other household members currently own an active e-tag? If yes, how many?

- Yes
- No
- Other

Number of active e-tags



4. What alternative route are you likely to use during the Alfred Street off ramp closure?

- Pacific Highway southbound to High Street, North Sydney
- Pacific Highway southbound to Falcon Street and Military Road eastbound
- Falcon Street/Military Road freeway southbound off ramp (tolled)
- From Northern Beaches -local roads south of Military connecting to Neutral Bay
- Other

5. Do any household members require access to community services?

- Yes
- No

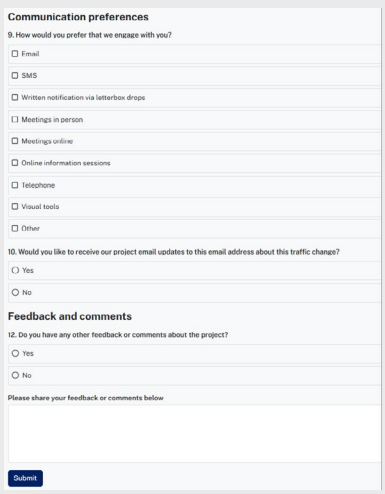
6. Do you have any other access requirements or individual circumstances you think we should be aware of?

- Yes
- No

7. Would you like someone from the project team to contact you about your feedback?

- Yes
- No

8. Please let us know if you have any other feedback in relation to closure of the Alfred Street off ramp that we should know about



**Communication preferences**

9. How would you prefer that we engage with you?

- Email
- SMS
- Written notification via letterbox drops
- Meetings in person
- Meetings online
- Online information sessions
- Telephone
- Visual tools
- Other

10. Would you like to receive our project email updates to this email address about this traffic change?

- Yes
- No

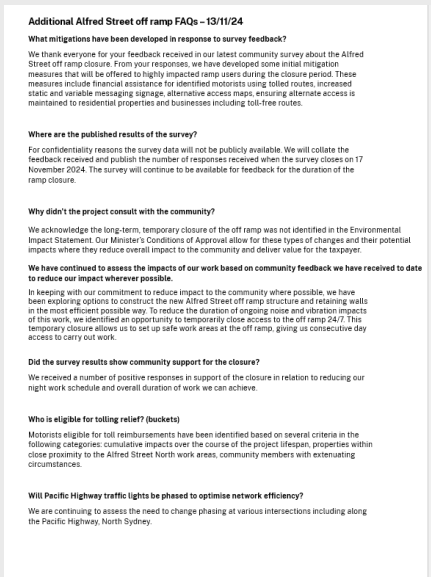
**Feedback and comments**

12. Do you have any other feedback or comments about the project?

- Yes
- No

Please share your feedback or comments below

Submit



**Additional Alfred Street off ramp FAQs – 13/11/24**

**What mitigations have been developed in response to survey feedback?**

We thank everyone for your feedback received in our latest community survey about the Alfred Street off ramp closure. From your responses, we have developed some initial mitigation measures that will be offered to highly impacted ramp users during the closure period. These measures include financial assistance for identified motorists using tolled routes, increased static and variable messaging signage, alternative access maps, ensuring alternate access is maintained to residential properties and businesses including toll-free routes.

**Where are the published results of the survey?**

For confidentiality reasons the survey data will not be publicly available. We will collate the feedback received and publish the number of responses received when the survey closes on 17 November 2024. The survey will continue to be available for feedback for the duration of the ramp closure.

**Why didn't the project consult with the community?**

We acknowledge the long-term, temporary closure of the off ramp was not identified in the Environmental Impact Statement. Our Minister's Conditions of Approval allow for these types of changes and their potential impacts where they reduce overall impact to the community and deliver value for the taxpayer.

**We have continued to assess the impacts of our work based on community feedback we have received to date to reduce our impact wherever possible.**

In keeping with our commitment to reduce impact to the community where possible, we have been exploring options to construct the new Alfred Street off ramp structure and retaining walls in the most efficient possible way. To reduce the duration of ongoing noise and vibration impacts of this work, we identified an opportunity to temporarily close access to the off ramp 24/7. This temporary closure allows us to set up safe work areas at the off ramp, giving us consecutive day access to carry out work.

**Did the survey results show community support for the closure?**

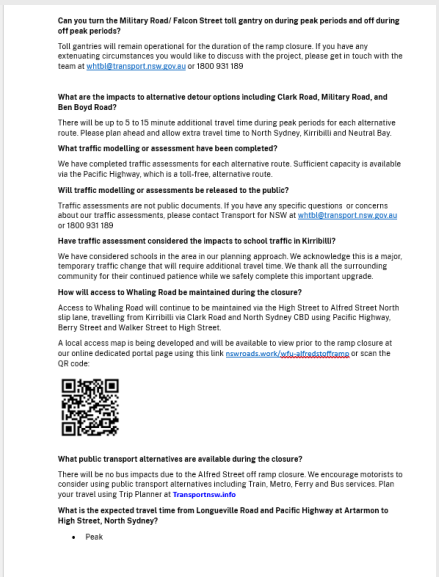
We received a number of positive responses in support of the closure in relation to reducing our night work schedule and overall duration of work we can achieve.

**Who is eligible for tolling relief? (buckets)**

Motorists eligible for toll reimbursements have been identified based on several criteria in the following categories: cumulative impacts over the course of the project lifespan, properties within close proximity to the Alfred Street North work areas, community members with extenuating circumstances.

**Will Pacific Highway traffic lights be phased to optimise network efficiency?**

We are continuing to assess the need to change phasing at various intersections including along the Pacific Highway, North Sydney.



**Can you turn the Military Road/ Falcon Street toll gantry on during peak periods and off during off peak periods?**

Toll gantries will remain operational for the duration of the ramp closure. If you have any extenuating circumstances you would like to discuss with the project, please get in touch with the team at whtbl@transport.nsw.gov.au or 1800 931 189

**What are the impacts to alternative detour options including Clark Road, Military Road, and Ben Boyd Road?**

There will be up to 5 to 15 minute additional travel time during peak periods for each alternative route. Please plan ahead and allow extra travel time to North Sydney, Kirribilli and Neutral Bay.

**What traffic modelling or assessment have been completed?**

We have completed traffic assessments for each alternative route. Sufficient capacity is available via the Pacific Highway, which is a toll-free, alternative route.

**Will traffic modelling or assessments be released to the public?**

Traffic assessments are not public documents. If you have any specific questions or concerns about our traffic assessments, please contact Transport for NSW at whtbl@transport.nsw.gov.au or 1800 931 189

**Have traffic assessment considered the impacts to school traffic in Kirribilli?**

We have considered schools in the area in our planning approach. We acknowledge this is a major, temporary traffic change that will require additional travel time. We thank all the surrounding community for their continued patience while we safely complete this important upgrade.

**How will access to Whaling Road be maintained during the closure?**

Access to Whaling Road will continue to be maintained via the High Street to Alfred Street North slip lane, travelling from Kirribilli via Clark Road and North Sydney CBD using Pacific Highway, Berry Street and Walker Street to High Street.

A local access map is being developed and will be available to view prior to the ramp closure at our online dedicated portal page using this link nswroads.work/wfu-alfredstofframp or scan the QR code:

**What public transport alternatives are available during the closure?**

There will be no bus impacts due to the Alfred Street off ramp closure. We encourage motorists to consider using public transport alternatives including Train, Metro, Ferry and Bus services. Plan your travel using Trip Planner at Transportnsw.info

**What is the expected travel time from Longueville Road and Pacific Highway at Artarmon to High Street, North Sydney?**

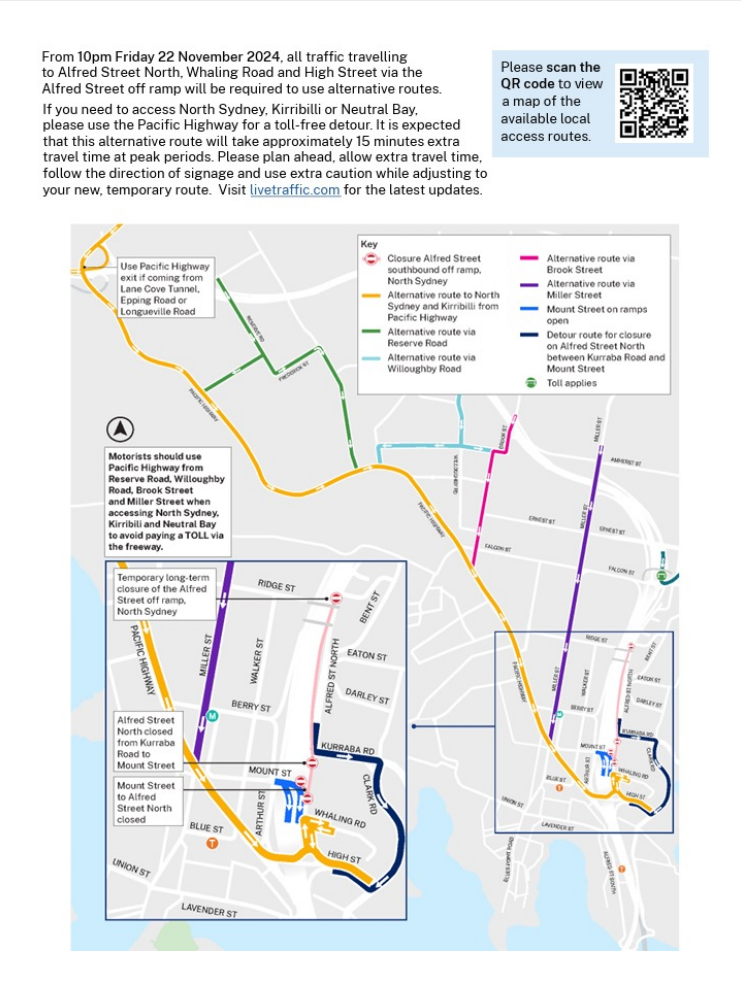
- Peak

We continued to seek feedback for the duration of the Alfred Street off ramp closure.

We thank the community for taking part in our November 2024 Alfred Street off ramp closure survey. Your feedback is important to us and provides valuable insights on potential mitigation measures we can implement while this ramp closure is in place. You can continue to provide feedback on the closure through this survey QR code.

**Scan the QR code to complete the short survey.**

## Alternative Access Routes map




Please view the community notification online: Temporary, long-term closure of the Alfred Street off ramp (November 2024).pdf

# 4.0 IMPACT

The temporary closure of the Alfred Street off-ramp represented one of the most significant engagement-led decisions on the project, delivering measurable benefits for both the construction programme and the surrounding community.

As a result of the closure, shaped and supported through extensive stakeholder engagement, the project team was able to establish continuous, safe work zones, enabling a highly intensive construction program.  Work undertaken during the closure included major earthworks, demolition of existing structures, construction of new retaining walls and medians, installation of utilities, and delivery of significant temporary works to support bridge construction.

While the intensity of works during the closure period resulted in short-term increases in noise and activity, particularly for residents in proximity, engagement ensured these impacts were understood, anticipated and actively managed. Feedback gathered during the engagement process directly informed the development of mitigation measures, including the use of acoustic blankets, non-tonal reversing alarms, directional lighting, and operational controls such as shutting down equipment when not in use. Importantly, these measures were not applied generically but tailored based on stakeholder input and proximity to works.

All the work zones and equipment laydown areas were separated from local traffic, pedestrians and cyclists. The community was informed in detail about the equipment being used which included excavators, concrete saws, concrete hammers, rock breaking equipment, hydro-demolition saws, mobile cranes, line marking equipment, heavy vehicles, concrete pumps, concrete and vacuum trucks, vibratory rollers, generators and asphalt paving equipment and rock bolting machines.

Engagement also played a critical role in maintaining accessibility and supporting community functionality. The initial survey identified parents accessing local schools and commuters travelling to the North Sydney CBD as high-priority user groups, as well as the importance of maintaining a non-tolled access option for local residents.

In response, numerous diversion maps were distributed via letterbox drops, digital platforms and school newsletters, ensuring affected users could plan and adapt with confidence.

The outcomes of this engagement-led approach were significant. By enabling a continuous work environment, the project achieved a:

Six-month program saving

- Completion of the Mount Street Underpass
- Completion of the Alfred Street southbound off ramp (viaduct)
- Completion of four retaining walls delivered during daytime shifts
- 5 traffic switches where significant lane closures affecting southbound motorists towards the Sydney Harbour Tunnel and Sydney Harbour Bridge were not required which minimised impact on motorists
- Completion of the Mount Street / Alfred Street North intersection upgrade
- Alfred Street North local road works footprint reduced, completed and returned six months earlier
- A reduction of 90 night shifts, including 60 noisy night shifts.
- Allowed the project team to access another package of critical work on another section of the southbound carriageway three months earlier
- Created the opportunity to open the newly constructed Falcon Street southbound bus bridge six months earlier than planned in a temporary state shared with cars.

These outcomes demonstrate a clear link between engagement and project performance. By involving stakeholders in decision-making and responding directly to their concerns, the project was able to deliver a construction approach that not only improved program efficiency but significantly reduced the overall duration and impact of disruption, strengthening social licence and delivering a more acceptable outcome for the community.

# 5.0 SATISFACTION

Given the scale, complexity and level of disruption associated with the Warringah Freeway Upgrade, measuring and maintaining stakeholder satisfaction required a multi-layered and adaptive approach. Rather than relying solely on traditional post engagement surveys, the project focused on real time feedback, participation levels and demonstrated responsiveness as key indicators of engagement quality.

A key measure of satisfaction was the level of participation achieved during high-impact engagement activities. The Alfred Street off ramp closure survey generated 1,488 responses, the highest level of engagement recorded on the project, exceeding previous consultation activities such as parking and access surveys. This level of participation, across a concentrated and directly impacted community, demonstrated both strong awareness and a willingness from stakeholders to engage in shaping project outcomes.

Importantly, satisfaction was not measured by agreement alone, but by the extent to which stakeholders felt heard and saw their feedback reflected in project decisions. This was evidenced through the direct translation of community concerns into tangible mitigation measures. For example, strong feedback regarding the financial burden of alternative travel routes led to the implementation of a toll reimbursement scheme, ensuring that affected residents were not disadvantaged. Similarly, feedback from local businesses informed the development of tailored business support packs, addressing access, customer wayfinding and communication needs.

Ongoing satisfaction was monitored through continuous engagement channels, including door knocking, community information sessions, direct stakeholder briefings and digital platforms. These channels enabled the project team to identify emerging issues early and respond quickly, maintaining transparency and building trust over time. Highly impacted stakeholders, including local schools, businesses and residents in proximity to works, were prioritised through targeted and repeated engagement to ensure their concerns were consistently addressed.

Qualitative feedback throughout the project reinforced the effectiveness of this approach. Stakeholders acknowledged the clarity of communication, the accessibility of the engagement team and the project's willingness to adapt in response to feedback. This was particularly evident during periods of intensive construction, where proactive communication and visible mitigation measures helped to manage expectations and reduce frustration. The project also received fewer complaints than anticipated with a total of 21 complaints received once the change was implemented.

The project also recognised that satisfaction in a high-impact infrastructure environment is closely linked to the duration and intensity of disruption. By adopting engagement-led decisions, such as the temporary closure of the Alfred Street off ramp, the project was able to significantly reduce overall construction duration, including the removal of 90 night shifts and completion of key works up to six months earlier than planned. These outcomes directly contributed to improved community experience by shortening the period of disruption.

Ultimately, satisfaction was reflected not only in participation and feedback, but in the project's ability to maintain its social licence to operate in a highly constrained and sensitive environment. By embedding feedback into decision-making, responding transparently to concerns and delivering measurable improvements to both program and community outcomes, the project demonstrated a mature and effective approach to engagement, one that prioritised trust, accountability and continuous improvement.

*"It's actually a good proposal which will save time on completion. Short term pain for longer term gain."- Local resident*

*"The closure of our exit ramp was a definite concern for residents.*

*Thankfully, we always received clear and concise communications from the community liaison team, and we were advised that the closure would result in a saving of 6 months from the overall project and 90 nights of work on Alfred Street North.*

*Having to use the Military Rd exit for a period of around 8 months was going to add additional cost to our commute, which the team acknowledged and offered us toll relief for the whole period, that was always paid promptly as soon as our toll invoices were sent." – Local resident*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND TO FIND OUT MORE

We would like to thank Warringah Freeway Upgrade Project Team for agreeing to share this case study and insights to advance engagement practice. This case study was authored by Anne Learmonth and peer reviewed by James McKenzie.

At the time of publishing, Anne was employed by CPB a CIMIC Group company in the position of Stakeholder and Community Relations Senior Manager. Anne has experience in the construction and not for profit sector and expertise in engagement on major infrastructure projects in Victoria and NSW specialising in community consultation and community agreements and the use of data to support implementation of feedback into complex construction programs. Anne was engaged by Engagement Institute to support practitioners to share their engagement story as a case study.

For more information about this project see:

Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade | Transport for NSW

To connect with the authors:

Sarah Power
Pamela Orfanos

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