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REGION'S ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE SECURED, TIME TO LOOK AT RAIL

The region's peak business organisation, Business Illawarra, has welcomed the announcement by the Federal Government that key major road infrastructure projects in the Illawarra would retain funding following the release of an independent strategic review of the Infrastructure Investment Program today.

Key economically significant projects advocated for by Business Illawarra - together with local members of parliament, business leaders and stakeholders - were retained, including:

- The Mount Ousley Interchange, a \$300 million project which will replace the existing, dangerous and inefficient intersection of the Princes Motorway and Mount Ousley Road.
- The Picton Road Motorway project, which has \$120 million in planning funding for the duplication of the Illawarra's only major transport link to greater Western Sydney to make it safer, more efficient and includes new interchanges at the Princes and Hume Motorways.

In addition, the following key road projects for the Shoalhaven were also retained:

- The Nowra Bridge project, a \$342 million project that provide a new, four-lane bridge over the Shoalhaven River and which is almost complete.
- The Milton Ulladulla Bypass, a \$940 million project that is currently in planning.
- Jervis Bay Road Intersection Upgrade, a \$164 million project to increase safety and efficiency of the intersection with the Princes Highway.
- Princes Highway upgrades south of Nowra to the Victorian border.
- Planning of the Nowra Bypass and network improvements.

Business Illawarra Executive Director Adam Zarth said that funding for the region's key road projects was hard to attain, and it was pleasing that the independent panel had retained them because of their economic significance and the strong business cases that underpinned them.

"We have worked hard to build the evidence base and successfully advocate with our members, local MPs and stakeholders for the Mount Ousley Interchange and the Picton Road Motorway. We are relieved that funding has been retained that they can be delivered," said Mr Zarth.

"Key road projects that are vital to the economic growth and performance of the Illawarra Shoalhaven have survived the review, and now we need to get on with their delivery in a way that provides opportunities for local businesses and skills our region's workforce."

"We also need to get on with the long-awaited work to improve our region's rail network connectivity and resilience, and we look forward to progress on the NSW Government's election commitment to undertake an Illawarra rail network masterplan."

"Business Illawarra and its affiliates have long advocated for a new rail link to Greater Sydney along the existing Maldon Dombarton rail corridor, known as the South West Illawarra Rail Link and, alongside near-term improvements to the South Coast Line, we are looking forward to finally seeing government come forward with planning and, eventually, delivery on these."

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Formerly the Illawarra Business Chamber, *Business Illawarra* is the region's peak business organisation; a not-for-profit advocacy group dedicated to the economic development of the Illawarra.