

21 June 2021

STATE BUDGET: RUBBER HITS THE ROAD ON MOUNT OUSLEY INTERCHANGE

The region's peak business advocacy organisation, Business Illawarra, has today joined the Minister for Transport, the Hon Andrew Constance MP and the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Shelley Hancock MP, at a pre-budget announcement of a further \$39 million to commence work on the Mount Ousley Interchange project, taking the NSW Government's total commitment to \$60 million.

The project will significantly improve the performance of the Princes Motorway (M1) at Mount Ousley, the gateway to the Illawarra and South Coast, which is beset by a number of issues as outlined by Business Illawarra's [2018 Illawarra First/NRMA research](#), which found that the road was carrying traffic volumes of 53,000 vehicles per day, of which 15% were heavy vehicles, and would reach capacity by 2025.

Following evidence-based advocacy by Business Illawarra, together with its members NSW Ports and the University of Wollongong, an initial announcement of \$21 million by the NSW Government was made in November last year to progress design and planning works, which are now complete. In the May 2021 federal budget, the Commonwealth followed this commitment with \$240 million that will complete the project.

President of Business Illawarra's Regional Advisory Council, Amy Harper, said that she was pleased to be a part of the announcement alongside the Ministers, and proud of the concerted advocacy that Business Illawarra had led for the project to proceed.

"So many businesses across our region will benefit from the enhancements to travel times, community safety and connectivity that the Mount Ousley Interchange project will deliver," said Ms Harper. "Illawarra First research found that the completed project will deliver \$46 million in economic benefits on a road which carries a high proportion of heavy vehicles, growing traffic volumes and is rapidly reaching a critical choke point."

Executive Director of Business Illawarra, Adam Zarth, said that the further \$39 million in funding in Wednesday's state budget would see the project ready to commence, which was timely given the growing demand on the road.

"Today's announcement of further funding is effectively the green light for this critical road project, and we are looking forward to seeing these figures in black and white in Wednesday's state budget," said Mr Zarth.

"The Mount Ousley Interchange project is vital to realising our economic potential, and will benefit every business in the freight and logistics supply chain, and everyone doing business at the University, which will benefit from greatly improved access to the Wollongong CBD and the motorway itself. It will also bring 457 jobs to our region providing a further boost to the local economy. As a project that Business Illawarra has worked closely with the government to advocate for, this funding is gratifying milestone and further justification of our evidence-based approach to advocacy."

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Business Illawarra Media Contact – Evan Marginson 0434 763 294

About Business Illawarra

Formerly the Illawarra Business Chamber, *Business Illawarra* is the region's peak business organisation, and the regional office of Business NSW responsible for the south-east of the state, including the Southern Highlands.