

12 March 2021

**CALL FOR COMMISSIONER TO ADDRESS BUSINESS CONCERNS IN THE  
SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

The region's peak business organisation, Business Illawarra, has today welcomed the Minister for Local Government's decision to appoint an administrator at Wingecarribee Shire Council as an opportunity to improve business conditions in the region, and has called for the NSW Small Business Commissioner to investigate the challenges faced by small business in the Shire and provide clear recommendations to the administrator.

Business Illawarra Executive Director Adam Zarth said that business chambers in the region had been raising concerns about conditions for small business in the Shire for many years and that the new leadership needed to be provided a set of clear recommendations from an appropriately qualified and resourced authority.

"The incoming administrator has been appointed to restore stability and certainty. The appointment of an administrator we believe should be augmented with a review by the NSW Small Business Commissioner to examine the issues and concerns of small businesses in the region," said Mr Zarth.

"The greatest challenges for business in the Highlands are delays in processing development applications for new and expanding businesses - and the associated fees and charges, together with the lack of progress on the Berrima and Moss Vale Bypasses, and the need for implementation plans to accompany Council's Destination Plan. Further detail is contained in our submission to the Destination Plan last year."

"We have requested the NSW Government assign the NSW Small Business Commissioner the task of conducting an independent review of Council processes and performance in respect of meeting the needs and requirements of small business. This request has the support of all three affiliated chambers of commerce in the region; the South Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Moss Vale and Rural Chamber of Commerce and Robertson Business Chamber."

"We will also be calling for the term of the administrator to be extended until the local government elections in September and that they adopt any recommendations well in advance of this, because local businesses cannot wait any longer."

"Finally, we wish to pay tribute to local members of parliament Nathaniel Smith and Wendy Tuckerman who have listened to the business community and advocated in our interests, and those of ratepayers."

A copy of our submission to the Destination Plan is available on the Business Illawarra website at <https://www.businessillawarra.com/content/dam/nswbc/businessillawarra/submissions>

— ENDS —

**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 in the Southern Highlands.

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