

# Media Release

3 October 2012

## **Regional road, freight and water upgrades recommended in State Infrastructure Strategy**

Fixing rail and road bottlenecks and upgrading bridges so producers can get agriculture, industrial products and natural resources to markets more efficiently are among the key recommendations for regional NSW in the State Infrastructure Strategy released today.

Infrastructure NSW has outlined \$9 billion worth of priority projects for the regions including new dams, better town water, road bypasses in mining communities and faster train services for commuters from Wollongong and Newcastle.

The 20-year Strategy prepared for the NSW Government by Infrastructure NSW estimates the regional and state-wide projects will add \$21 billion to the NSW economy by 2032.

Infrastructure NSW Chief Executive Paul Broad said NSW had the largest and most diversified regional economy of any state in Australia, and improvements to regional infrastructure were essential to its economic future.

“Regional NSW contributes around a quarter of the State’s economic output and provides the produce, commodities and resources that supply Sydney and the globe but it has been affected by the two-speed economy in recent years as mining has boomed,” Mr Broad said.

“The regions need infrastructure that links them efficiently to ports and markets as this will enable the growth of industries and jobs.

“Given the central importance of these links to the economic success of the regions, NSW has to avoid developing urban and regional infrastructure in isolation – what we need is better links between city and country.”

Major road and rail projects proposed for construction or planning in the Strategy are:

- An estimated \$1 billion program to address road and rail pinch points around the State to improve freight links and enable trucks to use the network more effectively.
- A \$300 million “Bridges for the Bush” program to upgrade the highest priority rural bridges to improve freight productivity.
- Continued work on major highway programs including construction of the Pacific Highway duplication and completion of the Princes Highway duplication to the Jervis Bay turn-off.
- Construction within 10 years of the F3 Extension to Raymond Terrace, improving connections between Sydney and Northern NSW. This is estimated to cost around \$900 million.
- Around \$500 million in investment in road and rail improvements for coal communities, to manage congestion, improve community safety and amenity, and to enable efficient freight movements.
- Identification of a Bells Line of Road/Castlereagh Freeway corridor between Sydney and the Central West.

Infrastructure NSW further supports a series of key freight rail developments that would be delivered federally or by private investors comprising:

- An improved connection through the Liverpool Ranges to the port of Newcastle, supporting the mining industry.
- Incremental upgrades to the Moss Vale-Unanderra freight rail line, estimated to cost around \$125 million for the Australian Rail Track Corporation to deliver.
- Construction of the Maldon-Dombarton rail line to provide an improved link to Port Kembla as a longer-term project funded by the private sector.

“These projects together will vastly improve the ability of regional producers of goods and commodities to get to export markets via our major ports,” Mr Broad said.

The Strategy also supports additional bypasses for towns on major highways to improve quality of life.

The Strategy recommends sweeping reforms to water and wastewater management, noting that small local government water utilities in the regions have not seen the same infrastructure investment as the metropolitan utilities.

The recommended reforms, worth an estimated \$1.1 billion, include:

- Merging of regional water authorities from around 105 to around 30 to increase efficiency and reduce waste.
- A \$700 million program of water and wastewater upgrades to ensure that regional towns meet national water quality standards.
- \$400 million for regional dam construction and safety upgrades.

“It is not acceptable in this day and age for towns in NSW to have water quality that is below the national standard,” Mr Broad said.

“Nor is it acceptable for water supplies to be at risk in country areas when they could be addressed through additional commitment to dams. We recommend a comprehensive, prioritised program of new and refurbished regional dams throughout NSW to address our variable climate and drought risk.

“This is an area of infrastructure need that we forecast will need significant investment over the next 20 years in response to community and industry needs.”

The State Infrastructure Strategy 2012-2032 is Infrastructure NSW’s independent advice to the NSW Government on the priority infrastructure investments and reforms required to drive productivity and economic growth.

The Strategy’s recommendations have been provided to the Government for its consideration in developing plans for infrastructure investment. For further information, the Strategy can be found on [www.insw.com](http://www.insw.com)

**Media contact:** Sandy Olsen on 0411 495 812 or [sandy.olsen@insw.com](mailto:sandy.olsen@insw.com)