COMMUNITY INVITED TO WALK ACROSS NEW OMEGA BRIDGE AT GERRINGONG

Member for Kiama Gareth Ward today announced that the NSW Government is giving the public a chance to walk across the new Omega Bridge on **Saturday 13th December**, before it is opened to traffic.

Mr Ward said that the new 350 metre long bridge, which will replace the railway crossing at Fern Street Gerringong, is a key feature of the $329 million Princes Highway upgrade between Mount Pleasant and Toolijoa Road.

“The Omega Bridge will link Fern Street with the Princes Highway just north of Gerringong,” he said.

“Work on the bridge started late last year and it is expected to be opened to traffic in early 2015.

“The community walk will be an opportunity for the public to get a close up look at the bridge before it is opened to traffic.

“It is certainly visually prominent due to the fact it curves up out of a flat surrounding landscape, making it highly visible from the nearby highway and countryside.

“The design of the bridge will ensure it becomes a landmark in the local area,” he said.

Mr Ward said that the community walk will be held on **Saturday 13th December between 9am and 12pm**, starting at Boxsell Oval on Fern Street.

“The community can enjoy a sausage sizzle and stalls set up on the oval while people walk across the bridge,” he said.

“Community members are advised parking will not be available at the oval and free bus services will run between 9am and 12pm between Gerringong town hall and Boxsell Oval. Motorists are advised to park their vehicles in Gerringong.

“The project team will also be available on the day to answer questions the community has about the Princes Highway upgrade.

“The Omega Bridge was built using a specialised technique known as ‘incremental launching’.
“This means it was pushed across the railway line with each segment moved forward, allowing space to be made for the next segment to be made directly behind it,” he said.

“This building method was chosen to reduce the impact on the local community, traffic and the railway line which are in a narrow corridor between the existing highway, Fern Street and the railway line.

“The bridge consisted of seven spans varying in length between 44 metres and 66 metres.

“The completed bridge has 16 segments, each about 22 metres long and weighing 460 tonne,” he said.

Mr Ward said that Kiama Municipal Council was approached with various names for the bridge with the naming committee agreeing on Omega Bridge. The name was suggested by the Gerringong and District Historical Society and some community members.

“The bridge crosses the site where the old Omega railway station once stood,” he said.

“The Omega station was built when the railway line opened in 1893 and named after the Omega estate on Mount Pleasant.

“The Princes Highway upgrade at Gerringong provides 7.5 kilometres of two lane highway between Mount Pleasant and Toolijooa Road.

“The upgrade includes new interchanges which provide access to Gerringong and Gerroa.

“Gerringong has also seen an economic boom from the highway upgrade with 250 local and transient workers using the town and surrounds as their base during the work,” Mr Ward said.

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