MEDIA RELEASE

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$7 MILLION FOR BEMBOKA RIVER BRIDGE

Member for Monaro John Barilaro today announced the Bemboka River Bridge (Marons Crossing) on the Snowy Mountains Highway has been included in the NSW Government’s Bridges for the Bush infrastructure program.

Mr Barilaro said the work is part of the O’Farrell-Stoner Government’s commitment to improving road safety and freight productivity by replacing or upgrading bridges over the next five years at 17 key locations in regional NSW.

“Our government is determined to make NSW number one again and that is why – even though times are tough – we are investing in infrastructure which will boost our economy by increasing productivity and creating jobs,” Mr Barilaro said.

“I’m delighted the State Infrastructure Strategy has recommended upgrading the Bemboka River Bridge and I’m even more delighted Premier O’Farrell has given the green light to get work underway.

“In our region this will mean a $7 million widening of the bridge over the Bemboka River to provide better access for freight trucks servicing the region’s agricultural and timber industries.”

The work will remove the only remaining higher mass limit (HML – 45.5 tonnes for semi-trailers; or 68 tonnes for B-doubles) deficient bridge on the Snowy Mountains Highway and will deliver a continuous 370 kilometres for heavy vehicles operating at HML.

Bridges for the Bush is an initiative to help rebuild the NSW economy by investing in critical infrastructure to remove a number of significant freight pinch points and bottlenecks on the state road network.

“Today we are committing an additional $135 million to the Bridges for the Bush program and we hope the Federal Government will soon respond to the submission we made in August seeking funding for these bridge replacements or upgrades.

“Half the nation’s road freight and three quarters of all interstate road freight journeys are on NSW roads, so it’s only fair and reasonable for the Federal Government to match our funding commitment for Bridges for the Bush,” Mr Barilaro said.

Bridges for the Bush involves replacing or upgrading five key priority higher mass limit (HML) deficient bridges on state-managed roads and 12 timber truss bridges on state, regional and local roads.
The initiative also aligns with the goals of the Australian Government, particularly the next stage of the Nation Building Program that specifically emphasises the importance of improving heavy vehicle freight productivity.

NSW Roads and Ports Minister Duncan Gay said Bridges for the Bush will provide thousands of continuous kilometres for higher productivity vehicles such as B-doubles operating at HML; not to mention fixing a number of heritage-listed timber truss bridges.

“It’s estimated that replacing or upgrading the five HML deficient bridges alone will remove 8,000 heavy vehicle trips from the freight task each year, saving the state more than $200 million in economic, social and environmental costs over the next 30 years,” Mr Gay said.

The Government worked closely with the logistics sector, local councils and the NSW Heritage Council to develop a targeted list of bridges to be replaced or upgraded over the next five years.

“Bridges for the Bush is part of an integrated program of works over the next five years, including a $277 million investment to upgrade grain rail branch lines, to enhance freight productivity in country NSW,” Mr Gay said.

Media: (Minister Gay’s Office) Lance Northey 0467 743 192
(Mr Barilaro’s Office) Henry Pike 0408 406 637