



MEDIA RELEASE

12 February 2019

MR/15 /19

Spotlight on regional transport and infrastructure in Dubbo

NSW Farmers is calling on all politicians to focus on regional infrastructure and improved inter-regional freight to supercharge regional and rural economies in the lead up to the State Election, including a sub-three hour freight journey from NSW's Central West to Western Sydney.

NSW Farmers President James Jackson says 80 per cent of the state's produce comes from west of the Great Dividing Range, yet the transport corridors linking western NSW to ports and markets in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong act as a significant barrier to growth.

"We are calling for all parties to commit to the end goal of delivering a reliable sub-three hour journey between Orange and Western Sydney, and as an initial step, to invest \$2.5 million to look into the best ways to achieve this.

"Currently it can take up to five-hours for a freight journey across the Great Dividing Range, and this is contributing to freight and logistics costs, which can make up 30-40% of the final price of agricultural products," Mr Jackson says

"The inadequate east-west freight linkages will stop our farmers from participating in lucrative fresh food export markets that will be facilitated by the new Western Sydney Airport. These opportunities require food to travel from paddock to plate in less than 36 hours; we can't afford to lose five hours on the road."

Key regional transport projects and issues will headline the next NSW Farmers Pre-Election forum in Dubbo on Wednesday 13 February, which will also focus on infrastructure needs for broader regional development. NSW Farmers is calling for \$8 billion from the sale of the Snowy Hydro project to fund regional development via investment in roads, rail and air, digital infrastructure, education and connected health services to ensure a lasting legacy of fit-for-purpose infrastructure for the 21st century.

"Building schools and hospitals are vital for the health and wellbeing of rural areas. Equally important is the delivery of place based services, including tele-health and online education, to ensure the health and wellbeing of regional residents is equivalent to those in cities," Mr Jackson said

"To ensure no one is left behind, NSW Farmers is calling for the state government, together with the Australian Government, to redouble its commitment to upgrade access to telecommunications, data and voice services in rural and regional NSW."

"Technology based connectivity is not a luxury, it's an essential business tool. For primary producers to produce high quality product with global market demand, it must be reliable and available to all."

"A focus on regional infrastructure will reinvigorate our regional communities, and can be a solution to the congestion and overpopulation issues facing Sydney. Towns like Orange and Bathurst, could be economic and social hubs with populations well over 100,000."

The NSW Farmers Transport and Infrastructure Pre-Election Forum will be held on Wednesday 13 February at the Westside Hotel, starting at 6.30pm and features the Hon John Barilaro MP, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and

Clayton Barr MP, Shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property.

Media Contact: **Michael Burt** | 0428 228 988



NSW Farmers – Level 4, 154 Pacific Highway, St Leonards 2065

[\[Unsubscribe\]](#)