



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FALLING DOWN ON NOWRA BRIDGE FUNDING

Almost two years after the announcement by the state government of the plan to create a new bridge crossing the Shoalhaven River, there has been no visible action and no announcement of federal funding for this vital infrastructure project, which will affect the opportunities for jobs and growth in the whole of Gilmore. “When will we ever get a new bridge?” asks Carmel McCallum, Greens candidate for Gilmore. “Never, if we wait on federal government funding or planning.”

In March this year, the RMS identified the Nowra Bridge precinct and surrounding intersections as one of the key choke-points on the Princes Highway between Yallah and the Victorian border. This affects most residents of Gilmore to varying degrees.

Mrs McCallum says, “With the population continuing to grow, it will only become worse, and because of the high cost, and being on the A1 highway, part of national infrastructure, the project will require urgent federal funding. “It is the No.1 highway priority for Gilmore, and federal and state government funding must be redirected to this project in preference to the Berry-Bomaderry highway upgrade. We are building a bridge for the next two centuries. We must get it right!”

“The Greens have long advocated that future river crossing projects need to be engineered to carry rail, and as such, the location will have to be east (downstream) of the existing bridges. Future goods transport will require rail and rail is the most sustainable option for improving public transport to the far south coast, and reinforcing this area’s accessibility to tourists who contribute so much to our economy.”

“This may have to be done in two stages, so that the old bridge continues to be used during construction, before it becomes unsafe. Where *is* the \$5 Million bridge assessment report? It's nowhere to be found. How long do we have?”, Mrs McCallum asks. “Where's the money? Where's the vision?”

“It is imperative that the federal government commits to a large financial input, if the new bridge is to be built. It’s all very well to talk about 30 minute cities, but regional areas must also be considered. It is currently a two and a half hour rail trip from Nowra to Sydney, and that does not take into account the distance other Gilmore people have to travel. If they are serious about employment and growth, let's prioritise Gilmore's future, and show commitment beyond party politics.”

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