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## POLES AND WIRES LEASE TO KICK-START ECONOMIC GROWTH ACROSS NSW

The Murray-Riverina NSW Business Chamber says the historic passing of legislation in the New South Wales Parliament to allow the partial lease of the publicly-owned electricity network will kick-start economic growth and attract investment in regional NSW including right here in the Murray & Riverina regions.

“At the March election, voters gave the Baird Government a clear mandate to proceed with its proposal to lease 49 per cent of the State’s electricity network to fund an ambitious program of infrastructure spending across NSW,” said Ben Foley, Regional Manager of the Murray-Riverina NSW Business Chamber.

“We took an active role in the lead up to the election in publicly supporting this policy as part of our *Unfinished Business* campaign.

“Despite initial concerns, the Murray-Riverina business community is extremely pleased to see the Upper House respect the Government’s mandate and move swiftly on this proposal. It not only provides much-needed certainty for business, but will help attract the investment needed to ensure NSW stays on the front foot.

“We have been liaising with other regional stakeholder organisations and our members to develop priority lists for regional infrastructure projects. This will continue to take time but what we have developed are some guiding principles which should be adopted as part of this strategy, these include:

- Regional Organisations of Councils (ROC’s) require the ability to bundle similar themed smaller local projects together as part of an overall regional submission which can be administered by the ROC’s.
- Regional areas should be afforded more time to develop proposals as such projects are not as readily evident as those in metropolitan regions.
- The NSW Government should see this as an opportunity to extend utility networks along the NSW side of the border so as to level the playing field with Victoria in terms of attracting & retaining new business ventures/ expansions.
- The Government needs to acknowledge that not all funds requested in a regional submission will necessarily generate new jobs but could potentially keep families within an area thus driving the local economy by retaining local businesses and job opportunities.

“Now that the legislation has passed the NSW Parliament, we look forward to seeing the Government get on with the job and begin working with key stakeholders in our region to ensure that funds are directed towards projects that will have a real impact on our community, Mr Foley said.

**Media Contact: Ben Foley 0418 211 126**