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## MEDIA STATEMENT

### Australia's rail renaissance reaches NSW South Coast

Australia's largest rail freight operators and infrastructure owners today congratulated the NSW Government's \$40 million commitment to upgrade 13-kilometres of the South Coast Rail Line.

Freight On Rail Group (FORG) of Australia Chair Dean Dalla Valle said the upgrade will allow the South Coast Rail Line to run heavier, more efficient freight trains with 25 tonne wheel-axle loads.

"Australian businesses and exporters like Manildra Group operate in fiercely competitive global markets – our rail freight networks must be efficient so the price of our products and commodities appeal to buyers and consumers around the world," said Mr Dalla Valle.

Mr Dalla Valle said moving regional produce by rail to the ports of Botany and Kembla should be efficient and cost-effective; not an exercise in battling 20<sup>th</sup> century freight bottlenecks.

"Running heavier freight trains delivers a productivity boost to the South Coast rail network; resulting in reduced transport costs and delays for farmers and exporters," said Mr Dalla Valle.

Mr Dalla Valle said regions like North America and Western Europe have a long history of investing heavily in rail freight infrastructure to shift the haulage of bulk commodities like grain, cotton, coal, steel, timber, wine, fuel and fertiliser from road to rail.

"Moving bulk freight by rail is safer, more efficient and cleaner than road – a typical freight train hauling containers takes up to 65 B-doubles off the road, while rail freight produces 16 times less carbon pollution per tonne kilometre than road," said Mr Dalla Valle.

Mr Dalla Valle said programs like the NSW Government's \$400 million Fixing Country Rail initiative and the Australian Government's \$10 billion Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail project signal the start of a 'rail renaissance' in Australia.

"I believe the many and varied benefits of rail have started to capture both the imagination and interest of our nation's key decision-makers – long may it continue," said Mr Dalla Valle.

Mr Dalla Valle said Minister Pavey's announcement will eliminate a notorious rail freight pinch point on the South Coast Rail Line, helping to stimulate further economic growth in the region.

"The \$40 million upgrade will also shift 350,000 tonnes of freight to rail, meaning safer, less congested and better maintained roads on the South Coast and beyond," said Mr Dalla Valle.

#### ENDS

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## About Freight On Rail Group (FORG) of Australia

FORG members contribute:

- More than \$11 billion to Australia's economy each year
- Employ almost 20,000 people across the nation
- Operate 1,600 freight locomotives and 34,000 units of rolling stock (e.g. train wagons)
- Manage 23,000 kilometres of rail track