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The Courier

Information and Advice for NSW Transport Operators

Newsletter Vol. 4 No. 7: NSW Budget Edition, 20 June 2018

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NSW Economic Outlook, 2018-19

Today's NSW Budget handed down by Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet, suggests that the NSW economy will continue to grow steadily based on the following economic indicators:

- Real Gross State Product up by 2.75%.
- Employment: up by 1.75%.
- Unemployment rate averaged across 2018-19: 4.75%.
- CPI Sydney: 2.25%.
- Wage Price Index: 2.5%.
- Population growth: 1.4%.

NSW Generations Fund Established

On the back of a \$3.9 billion surplus in 2017-18, the NSW Government has committed to establish the NSW Future Generations Fund with an initial contribution of \$3 billion. The forecast surplus in 2018-19 is \$1.6 billion, a figure that is forecast to be maintained over the four-year budget outlook period.

Payroll Tax Relief

The NSW Government will lift the payroll tax threshold from the current level of \$750,000 to \$1 million by 2021-22.

The threshold, the point at which companies start paying payroll tax, will rise to \$850,000 in 2018-19, \$900,000 in 2019-20, \$950,000 in 2020-21 and \$1 million in 2021-22.

Every State Highway to be Fully Sealed by 2023

Every NSW highway will be sealed after an announcement of additional \$40 million to complete the seal of the Cobb and Silver City highways. All of the other State Highways in NSW are sealed for their entire length.

This will ensure all of NSW's major highways are completely sealed and weather proof by 2023.

Funds will be allocated to seal the final 107 kilometres of the Silver City Highway north and south of Tibooburra as well as the final 94 kilometres of the Cobb Highway between Ivanhoe and Wilcannia.

Funding to Improve Road Safety on Country Roads

Increased funding will also be allocated in accordance with the NSW Government's *Saving Lives on Country Roads Program* to install and upgrade safety features on country roads and reduce run off road crashes, crashes on curves and head on crashes. This program includes:

- Addressing high risk curves through improved curve signage, widened shoulders, vehicle activated signage and safety barriers.
- Reducing crash types commonly related to lane departure and driver fatigue by installing wide centre lines, flexible barriers, audio tactile (rumble) line marking and sealed shoulders.
- Ongoing targeted Police enforcement to reduce risky behaviour common in crashes on country roads.

Funding in the 2018-19 Budget will enable an additional 50 Highway Patrol officers to be deployed in regional areas to support increased random breath testing, drug testing and enforcement of road laws.

Other New Road Funding Initiatives

Other new road funding initiatives include:

- Heathcote Rd: \$173m to fund widening of the bridge over the Woronora River at Engadine and for duplication between Infantry Pde and The Avenue in Holsworthy.
- Nowra Bridge - \$155 million reserved to match Australian Government funding and enable a new Princes Highway bridge to be built across the Shoalhaven River;
- Henry Lawson Dr - \$100 million for widening between the M5 Motorway and Milperra Rd;
- \$1.8 billion for the new Westconnex motorway with the M4 East Tunnel opening in first half of 2019;
- \$1.2 billion to continue the NSW and Australian Government funded Pacific Highway upgrade, including planning and preconstruction for the Coffs Harbour Bypass;
- \$439 million for the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan which is providing upgrades of key routes from Liverpool, Penrith and Campbelltown to access to the new Western Sydney Airport;
- \$281 million for easing congestion at pinch points across Sydney including upgrades around Sydney airport and the M4 Motorway;
- \$244 million for the Princes Highway, allowing commencement of the Albion Park Rail Bypass, the Berry to Bomaderry upgrade and the replacement bridge at Batemans Bay;
- \$178 million to continue planning and preconstruction for the F6 extension Stage 1, Western Harbour Tunnel, Beaches Link and Sydney Gateway;
- \$165 million for Central Coast roads including widening the Pacific Motorway and upgrading the Empire Bay Dr intersection with The Scenic Rd and Cochrane St, Kincumber;
- \$119 million for road freight safety and productivity in regional New South Wales;
- \$84 million for the New England Highway including the Scone bypass and the Bolivia Hill upgrade between Glen Innes and Tenterfield;
- \$81 million for Bridges for the Bush, allowing construction of new bridges to commence at Gunnedah, Barrington and on Nerriga Rd near Braidwood;
- \$62 million for the Newell Highway including overtaking lanes and planning for new bridge at Dubbo, and;

- \$55 million for upgrades to Hunter roads, including completion of the intersection upgrade where the M1 Motorway meets John Renshaw Dr and Weakleys Dr.
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Record Investment for Workplace Mental Health

The State Budget also allocates \$55 million NSW Government investment in mental health initiatives under a new Mentally Healthy Workplaces in NSW Strategy 2022.

Under the strategy, funds will be allocated to areas including manager training and recovery at work programs, research projects to help inform ongoing strategies, a media campaign and online resources to raise awareness, as well as assessment and mentoring tools which aim to provide better support to businesses.