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The Courier

Information and Advice for NSW Transport Operators

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NSW Government Announces Plan to Establish Single Jurisdiction for Workers Compensation, CTP Disputes

Adapted from media release, Minister for Customer Service, Hon Victor Dominello MP, 12 August, 2019

The NSW Government has announced changes to the dispute resolution system which are designed to simplify the compensation claim process for injured road users and workers.

Minister for Customer Service, Victor Dominello, said simplification will occur through the establishment of a single, independent jurisdiction for workers compensation and compulsory third party insurance.

Mr Dominello said the changes are being introduced as part of the government's response to separate reviews by the NSW Parliament's Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice, conducted in 2018, which dealt with the workers compensation scheme and the compulsory third party insurance scheme.

He said the establishment of a single, independent jurisdiction for workers compensation and CTP disputes will provide greater alignment of dispute resolution processes across schemes.

This will be achieved by expanding the jurisdiction of the Workers Compensation Commission while retaining separate streams of expertise dealing with claims related to either workers compensation or CTP.

"We acknowledge that the current dispute resolution process can be improved and we want to provide the best possible experience for those injured in the workplace or on our roads, in order to support their rehabilitation and recovery."

"We want to reduce complexity and potential 'process trauma' for those seeking to dispute an insurer's decision," Mr Dominello said.

Editorial Comment

Claims management is often frustrating. Dealing simultaneously with separate bureaucracies related to workers compensation and CTP claims can add to that frustration, especially for transport operators and drivers directly affected by trauma and/or financial loss.

ARTIO NSW has made regular submissions to the NSW Parliament's Standing Committee on Law and Justice since the election of the O'Farrell Government in 2011. This is because ARTIO NSW recognised significant reform was necessary. During that time, it has been one of less than a handful of industry associations to consistently do so.

Issues raised by ARTIO NSW have been acknowledged in various Committee reports. At times, ARTIO NSW's position has won government support, especially in relation to workers compensation reforms. Sometimes, ARTIO NSW's views have been aired by others, which gives weight to overall stakeholder views about the need for change.

In its submission to the 2018 review of the workers compensation scheme, ARTIO NSW advocated a transformation of claims administration, not just disputes, based on the needs of claimants. This would mean a move away from the existing arrangements which treat workers compensation claims and CTP claims through separate agencies.

Minister Dominello's announcement is welcome because it provides the opportunity to simplify the handling of disputes related to workers compensation and CTP claims.

Upward Trend Evident in Heavy Rigid Truck Fatalities

The number of fatal crashes involving rigid heavy trucks in Australia continues to trend upwards, while the number of fatal crashes involving articulated trucks in Australia, and heavy trucks overall, continues to trend downwards, according to the Bureau of Industry, Transport and Regional Economics.

Figures released by the BITRE for the year ending 30 June 2019 show 183 people died in 162 fatal heavy truck crashes. A total of 95 deaths from 85 fatal crashes involved articulated trucks while 94 deaths were reported from 82 heavy rigid crashes.

The number of fatalities involving articulated trucks is unchanged from the year ending 30 June 2018. An additional five people lost their lives in fatal crashes involving heavy rigid trucks in the year ending 30 June 2018 when compared to a year earlier.

39 people died in heavy rigid crashes in NSW in the year ending 30 June 2019, six more than the previous year.

Private Sector Wages Growth Rate Remains Steady

Figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that growth in private sector rates of pay excluding bonuses remained steady at 2.3% for the year ending 30 June 2019. This is the same percentage increase as was recorded in the 12 month periods ending 31 March 2019 and 31 December, 2018.

Rates of pay excluding bonuses in the transport postal and warehousing sectors grew by 2.4 per cent in the year to 30 June, compared to 2.5 per cent in the year ending 31 March.

Wages Growth to Remain Sluggish Says Reserve Bank

The rate of wages growth will continue on its current sluggish trajectory, according to the Reserve Bank's latest quarterly bulletin, notwithstanding recent strong growth in the labour market.

The banks says that because Australian economy has been navigating a period of slow growth, the unemployment rate is expected to remain around its current level for a time, before declining to around 5 per cent in 2021. Wages growth is therefore likely to remain low and, then, to increase more gradually.

It also predicts a moderation in the rate of employment growth. With increasing demand for labour being met by an expansion in labour supply, spare capacity remains in the labour market, which has weighed on wages growth.

The Bank also says GDP growth is likely to have bottomed out around the middle of this year and is expected to reach about 2½ per cent over 2019, 2¾ per cent over 2020, and around 3 per cent over 2021.

The Bank forecasts inflation to remain around 1½ per cent for the rest of this year, before increasing to be a little under 2 per cent over 2020 and a little above 2 per cent over 2021.

It also says domestic financial conditions have also eased with reductions to the Bank's cash rate in June and July largely passed through to deposit and lending rates. Bank funding costs have also declined to historically low levels. Credit growth has continued to slow, but there was an increase in housing loan approvals in June. Some lenders have announced changes to their lending criteria, which have boosted borrowing capacity for some customers.

It says slow growth in household incomes has dampened consumption spending for some time. However, household incomes will receive a boost in the second half of 2019 from tax cuts. The outlook for consumption more broadly continues to be the main uncertainty facing the domestic economy, especially given ongoing high levels of household debt.

A more positive signal for future consumption is that established housing markets appear to have stabilised. House prices in Sydney and Melbourne have stopped falling while in some other markets, the pace of decline has eased. Rental vacancies remain low in most cities, except in Sydney, where the vacancy rate has increased as new apartments continue to be added to the rental stock.

Non-mining business investment continues to expand at a moderate pace, supported by a solid pipeline of non-residential building work and infrastructure projects. Further out, the Bank also predicts a pick-up in mining investment.

Bank Prepared to Ease Interest Rates Further

The Bank says that given the current economic environment, it is reasonable to expect that an extended period of low interest rates will be needed to achieve its employment and inflation objectives. It says it will continue to monitor developments in the labour market closely and is prepared to ease interest rates further if needed to support sustainable growth in the economy and the achievement of the inflation target over time.

Federal Government Launches Regional Business Pilot Prioritising Hiring of Women

Adapted from media release, Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business Senator The Hon Michaelia Cash MP and Senator The Hon Marise Payne MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, 16 August, 2019

The Federal Government has launched a new initiative to help skilled women across regional Australia get back into the workforce.

The Career Revive pilot program, which is run by KPMG, will help up to 30 medium to large regional companies find better ways to attract and retain skilled women.

Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, Michaelia Cash, said the Federal Government was committed to helping more women become competitive in the labour market.

Ms Cash said women in regional areas can experience barriers that make it harder for them to return to work such as access to childcare, transport, training and development.

“Career Revive will offer expert advice to regional business on how to support and attract women back into the workforce by improving their business practices and policies,” Ms Cash said.

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Marise Payne, said the Career Revive program will provide rural and regional women with greater choices for paid work.

"We are committed to boosting the confidence of women returning to paid work and their financial independence, as well as supporting businesses to retain skilled women workers," Ms Payne said.

The Career Revive pilot will work with business to test what interventions help break down barriers faced by women when returning to work.

Further information is available from www.employment.gov.au/career-revive.

Federal Government Launches Employment Program to Trial Industry Engagement

Adapted from media release, Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business Senator The Hon Michaelia Cash MP, 19 August, 2019

The Federal Government will spend \$10 million to expand the Youth Jobs PaTH program to help industry fast track jobs for young Australians, according to Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash.

Ms Cash said the funding for the Youth Jobs PaTH Program will directly connect job seekers with employers and industries with significant workforce needs, particularly growth industries.

She said the government is responding to calls from industry for greater input in selecting, training, matching and supporting young job seekers. Industry pilots will test the effectiveness and benefits of industry-led pre-employment pathways designed to fast track young people into work."

Ms Cash said the Morrison Government will seek expressions of interest from organisations such as industry groups, business peak bodies, employers and group training organisations interested in designing and delivering industry pilots that help young people gain the skills and experience they need to find sustainable work.

Youth Jobs PaTH helps young people learn the skills that employers need, and gives them a chance to demonstrate those skills in the workplace while providing businesses a wage subsidy of up to \$10,000.

Further information on Youth Jobs PaTH Industry Pilots is available from www.tenders.gov.au/Atm/Show/c9f576f8-00cc-45c5-bf72-d25a4366fc8 or www.employment.gov.au/employment-services-purchasing-information.

ACCC Raises Awareness About Scams

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is raising awareness about scams by asking people whether they are "too smart to be scammed?"

This year the ACCC is urging Australians to test whether they can spot a scam or are likely to fall victim to a scam.

It says scammers can target any small business. Scammers are taking advantage of new technology to prey on their victims.

One of the most common scams is business email compromise scams. These cost Australian businesses over \$60 million according to reports made to Scamwatch and the Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network in 2018.

Case Study – Business Email Compromise Scam

We are the victims of an email hacking scam. The scammers appear to have hacked a supplier's email and advised us of a change in bank details. The scammers sent us invoices with amended bank details as well as the prior email trail to and from the supplier so they must have been in their IT system. Everything was a perfect copy of a real version of the invoices we were so used to. We didn't notice the difference. Thinking it was real we sent an amount of \$190 000 but the real supplier never received it. The email address was also

correct for the supplier, but they told us that they did not receive our responses. The scammers seem to have some way of hiding our responses from the supplier. We didn't find out about this until our supplier contacted us via phone to talk about not receiving the money.

Signs this is a Scam

In this type of scam, the invoices can look genuine and the scammers will include copies of previous invoices to make it appear real. Scammers often pose as a regular supplier and notify the business that their banking details have changed. They might say they have recently changed banks, and may use stolen letterheads and branding or even hack emails to seem legitimate.

How to Protect Your Small Business

The ACCC says:

- Contact the supplier directly using a second, reliable mode of communication such as a known phone number to verify the request to change bank details.
- Consider using a multi-person approval process for transactions over a certain dollar threshold with processes in place to ensure the business billing you is the one you normally deal with.
- Keep your IT security up-to-date, and ensure you regularly run antivirus software and have a good firewall to protect your data.

For more information about scams, where to get help if you've been scammed or to report a scam, visit the Scamwatch website at www.scamwatch.gov.au.

Infrastructure Australia Issues Report on Australia's Future Infrastructure Needs

Adapted from "Assessment of Australia's Future Infrastructure Needs The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019" issued by Infrastructure Australia

An Assessment of Australia's Future Infrastructure Needs The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019, which was released on 8 August, provides a comprehensive outline of the issues and challenges facing Australia in relation to the provision of all forms of economic and social infrastructure, including transport.

The report recognises that infrastructure is central to our quality of life but with user needs evolving, it is very likely, in coming decades, our infrastructure will look very different.

It says this requires a more robust planning approach based on an ambitious vision, the ability to anticipate and adapt to change, manage risk, and deliver infrastructure that works towards our current and future needs.

It has provided the lens through which current infrastructure capacity has been assessed and identified the challenges and opportunities in the next 15 years.

Findings related to transport infrastructure include:

- Passenger kilometres in cars grew by only 8 per cent between 2005-16 and 2015-16, compared to growth of 24 per cent in public transport and a 50 per cent growth in freight transport.
 - Freight transport will continue to grow at rates faster than population growth.
 - Freight transport is forecast to grow by 26 per cent between 2015-16 and 2025-26.
- Freight costs are little changed since the 1990's but can be lowered through automation and further mechanisation.
 - Constraints to improved freight efficiency include
 - Urban congestion at ports, intermodal terminals and airports particularly in Sydney and Melbourne, and on key urban freight routes.
 - Inconsistent regulation between levels of government and variable construction and maintenance standards which hinder access to supply chains and markets
 - The impact of on-line shopping on demand for freight deliveries.
 - Bottlenecks in agricultural supply chains due to low quality and poorly maintained infrastructure.
- The proportion of journeys to work nationally has grown from 9 per cent in 2011 to 9.9 per cent in 2016.
 - 71 per cent of journeys to/from the Sydney CBD during peak times are by public transport.
 - 69 per cent of passenger trips in inner Sydney throughout the day involve public transport, cycling or walking.

- Road congestion will cost the Australian economy \$38.8 billion by 2031.
 - Over the 15 years to 2031, road congestion costs will double in major cities.
- Regional and remote communities face a deterioration in the quality of local infrastructure,
- Transport operators and governments face many challenges in ensuring legacy transport networks remain fit for purpose.
 - There is a need to better align transport infrastructure with population growth as well as greenfield development, redevelopment of existing urban lands (brownfield development) and other public infrastructure.
 - Greenfield development now accounts for only 20 per cent of Sydney's population growth, thus adding to pressure on legacy transport networks where urban consolidation is taking place.
 - Transport patterns are becoming more complex in terms of time of day, day of the week, origin, destination, transport mode and other variables.

This report is available at www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/australian-infrastructure-audit-2019.

NSW Government Releases Age Discrimination Tool Kit

Adapted from media release, Minister for Seniors, Hon John Sidoti MP and Age Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Kay Patterson, 8 August, 2019

The NSW Government has released a new toolkit to help employers, managers and HR professionals engage and retain older workers and fight age discrimination in the workplace.

Minister for Seniors, John Sidoti, said the toolkit outlines the relevant provisions of the federal Age Discrimination Act and provides guidance, case studies and a checklist for promoting the inclusion and value of older workers.

Age Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Kay Patterson, said that Australians are increasingly continuing to work and wanting to work as they get older.

The toolkit is available from www.humanrights.gov.au/olderworkers.

NHVR Seeking Submissions on Grain Harvest Management Schemes

Adapted from media release, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, 22 August, 2019

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator is seeking feedback on the different heavy vehicle loading schemes used during grain harvest across Australia.

NHVR Executive Director Freight and Supply Chain Productivity, Peter Caprioli, said the *Grain Harvest Management Schemes Review Issues Paper* called for feedback on the creation of national standards.

“There are currently a range of schemes operating nationally with allowances for mass and operational conditions that vary significantly in each state,” Mr Caprioli said.

“The issues paper looks at the various opportunities and challenges that exist with the current schemes, and options to achieve national consistency.

“Developing a set of national standards has the potential to increase cross-border access, which would help boost regional industries and economies through better connected regions.”

Different state schemes currently operate in NSW, Queensland, Victoria and SA. A scheme also operates in WA is outside the Heavy Vehicle National Law.

Each scheme allows for a variety of allowances, including increased loads of up to 10 per cent.

“The review may recommend developing a set of national standards in relation to Grain Harvest Management Scheme operator accreditation, vehicle conditions, grain receiver processes and other applicable conditions to ensure consistency for operators and businesses,” he said.

Submissions close on October 18. To access the paper visit www.nhvr.gov.au/consultation.

Road Works Update

Closure, M4 Motorway Mamre Road Westbound On Ramp in September

RMS has advised the following closures of the Mamre Road Westbound on ramp on the M4 Motorway:

- Tuesday 10 to Friday 13 September: three night ramp closure, 9pm-5am.
- Sunday 15 to Friday 20 September: five night ramp closure, 9pm-5am.

Closure, Castlereagh Rd, Penrith, from Jane St to Thornton Dr in September

RMS has advised that Castlereagh Rd, Penrith, from Jane St to Thornton Dr will be closed from 10pm, Friday, 6 September to 5am, Monday, 9 September. Access to Museum Dr from Castlereagh Rd will be available throughout the closure with a secondary access to the Museum of Fire offered via Combewood Ave.

Traffic will be diverted to The Northern Rd via Andrews Rd on the northern side and Jane St on the southern side of the railway line.

Closure, Camp St Bridge, Forbes from 25 August

RMS has advised that work is commencing on the Camp St Bridge replacement project in Forbes on Sunday, 25 August.

Construction of the bridge will involve closure of Camp St for up to 43 weeks.

Heavy vehicles over 22.5 tonnes GVM and over 12.5m length will be detoured via Wirrinya Rd, Red Bend Rd, Lachlan Valley Way and Flint St. RMS advises this will add 15.5 klms or 22 minutes travel time to the journey.

Other vehicles can detour via the local road network.

Closure, Coolumbooka River Bridge, Cathcart Road, Bombala from 26 August

RMS has advised that the Coolumbooka River Bridge, Cathcart Road, Bombala, will be closed for essential maintenance for approximately 12 weeks from Monday, 26 August, weather permitting.

During the first six weeks of work, the bridge will close to traffic on Mondays to Fridays between 7am and 6pm and Saturdays from 8am to 1pm.

A detour for all vehicles is available via Black Lake Road and the Monaro Highway.

Diversion, Detours, Bringelly Rd

RMS has advised that has now completed part of the new westbound lanes of the Bringelly Rd upgrade.

Road users will be diverted onto the new lanes between Allenby Rd and King St, Rossmore on Monday 26 August, weather permitting.

The intersection of Bringelly Rd and Church St, Rossmore will be complete and open to traffic for left in and left out movements.

The new section of Masterfield St leading from Bringelly Rd to Rossmore Ave will also be open with a temporary roundabout allowing all turning movements.

The current intersections on Bringelly Rd at North Ave and Glen Allan Rd will be temporarily closed from Monday 26 August 2019 and will re-open May 2020, weather permitting.

Traffic detours will be in place. Motorists can use the new intersections at Masterfield St, Church St or King St to reach North Ave and Glen Allan Rd.

Other Road Works

The following new road work alerts may impact your operations. Please refer to earlier editions of *The Courier* for other current road works.

Suburb/ Town	Road	Date/s	No of Shifts	Work Times
Bondi Junction	Bondi Rd from Pinkevil St to Flood St	25/8-6/10/19	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri

Caringbah/ Miranda	Kingsway from Taren Pt Rd to Gurnier Ave	1/9-1/11/19	21	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Crows Nest	Cnr Falcon St and West St; West St between Burlington St and Falcon St	25/8-27/9/19	20	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Moore Park	Anzac Pde southbound cnr Lang Rd and Cleveland St	11/8-13/9/19	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Padstow Heights	Henry Lawson Dr from Needlewood Gr to Clancy St	1/9-8/11/19	26	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Penrith	High St, Jane St, Castlereagh Rd and Mulgoa Rd from Rodley Ave to Museum Dr	1/10-30/11/19	n/a	7am-7pm Mon-Fri 8pm-1am Sat 7pm-6am Mon-Sun

Economic and Industry Indicators

Indicator/Source ¹	As at	Unit of Measure	Quantity	Annual % Variation
GDP latest quarter (ABS)	Mar Qtr 2019	\$m	463,613	1.7
CPI (ABS)	Jun Qtr 2019	Per cent		1.6
Cash rate (RBA)	Current	Per cent	1.0	
Estimated residential population (ABS)	23 Aug 2019	Million	25,459	1.7
Retail turnover (ABS)	Jun 2019	\$m	27,449	2.7
Actual new capital expenditure (ABS)	Mar Qtr 2019	\$m	29,451	-0.8
Inventories held by private business (ABS)	Mar Qtr 2019	\$m	162,129	1.0
Dwelling unit approvals (ABS)	Jun 2019	Number	14,501	-20.9
Manufacturers Income (ABS)	Mar 2019	\$m	81,819	-3.4
TEUs Port Botany (NSW Ports)	12 months to Jun 2019	Number	2,640,519	1.0
Employed persons (ABS)	Jul 2019	Million	12,915	2.7
Unemployment rate (ABS)	Jul 2019	Per cent	5.3	0.0
Wage price Index (ABS)	Jun Qtr 2019	Per cent		
All employees				2.3
Transport, postal and warehousing				2.4
New motor vehicle sales (FCAI)	7 months to Jul 2019	Number	637,650	-7.7
Cab Chassis/Prime Mover Sales (TIC)	6 months to Jun 2019	Number	15,715	-7.1
Vans (TIC)	6 months to Jun 2019	Number	3,174	4.2
AIP Terminal Gate Price-Diesel-Sydney	23 Aug 2019	Cents/litre incl. GST	134.7	-3.2

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¹ ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics; RBA – Reserve Bank of Australia; AIP – Australian Institute of Petroleum; FCAI – Federated Chamber of Automotive Industries; TIC – Truck Industry Council/’Prime Mover’ latest issue.