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The Courier

Information and Advice for NSW Transport Operators

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COVID-19: National Cabinet Endorses Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan

Adapted from media release, The Hon Scott Morrison, Prime Minister, 15 May, 2020

National Cabinet has endorsed the Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Plan developed by the National Mental Health Commission, in conjunction with NSW and Victorian government agencies.

The Plan acknowledges the significant impact of COVID-19 on the mental health and wellbeing of many Australians.

Mr Morrison said there had been an increase in calls for help to crisis and support services, with Beyond Blue, Lifeline and Kids Helpline together receiving over 130,000 contacts in the past month, an increase of between 25 and 56 per cent for each service, compared with the same time last year.

He said the Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Plan has three core objectives:

- Meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of all Australians to reduce the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the short and long term;
- Outline seven key principles and 10 key priorities to inform the jurisdictions as they respond to the challenges of COVID-19 during the response and recovery from the pandemic; and
- Define governance, coordination and implementation requirements across jurisdictions to facilitate informed planning and decision making.

Mr Morrison said National Cabinet noted that the Commonwealth's commitment of \$48.1 million in the plan focused on:

- Improving data and research with more immediate monitoring and modelling of mental health impact of COVID-19, including boosting national capability in monitoring, anticipating and reacting to mental health impacts of the pandemic; expanding the national self-harm and suicide monitoring systems; and investment in the National Suicide Prevention Research Fund;

- Supporting vulnerable groups by supporting services accessible in homes, workplaces, aged care, schools and other community sites - with a specific focus on vulnerable groups; and
- Better coordination and communications - more connectivity through improved service linkage and coordination, including a national mental health communication campaign to manage anxiety and encourage mental wellbeing and systems to guide the onward care of people contacting federal digital and telephone support services by connecting them to appropriate local services that provide outreach care in the home.

All governments agreed on the need for each jurisdiction to ensure Australians receive the mental health services and support they require at this time, and in the coming phases of recovery and rebuilding.

COVID-19: Fall in Wages and Employment Levels Continues in Transport

Employment and payroll data provided by the Australian Taxation Office through its single touch payroll system for the period from the week ending 14 March to the week ending 2 May shows signs of a tentative recovery in economic activity.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the number of people in work has fallen by 7.3 per cent over the seven weeks to 2 May compared to a fall of 7.5 per cent in the five weeks ending 18 April.

Over the seven week period to 2 May, there has been recovery in wages paid, with total wages paid down by 5.4 per cent, compared to a fall of 8.2 per cent for the five weeks ending 18 April.

However, there was further deterioration in the transport, postal and warehousing sectors, with employment down by 6.7 in the seven weeks to 2 May, compared to three per cent for the five weeks ending 18 April.

Wages paid in the transport, postal and warehousing sectors fell by 8.7 percent in the seven weeks ending 2 May, compared to a 5.6 per cent fall in the five weeks to 18 April.

Mining, manufacturing, wholesaling, accommodation and food, and arts and recreation are the hardest hit sectors of the economy over the seven week period to 2 May in terms of jobs lost and/or wages paid.

The loss of jobs over the seven weeks to 2 May has been greatest in Victoria, followed by NSW, Tasmania and SA, while the fall in total wages paid is greatest in WA, followed by Victoria and NSW.

COVID-19: icare Supports NSW Businesses During These Challenging Times

Advice from icare

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact NSW businesses, icare is providing support for its customers wherever it can.

When it comes to managing their workers insurance premiums, icare customers affected by COVID-19 are benefitting from a range of support measures.

These include adjustments to their wages to reduce premium or deferral of premium payments for those experiencing extreme financial hardship.

Where an employer has had to reduce their workforce due to COVID-19, the resulting reduction in their wages bill will reduce their premium. icare is asking every employer to get in touch and provide their updated wages prior to their policy renewal to ensure their premium for 2020-21 is reflective of their changed circumstances.

To date around 9,200 businesses have been in touch to reduce their wages, resulting in premium reductions totalling over \$46 million.

This has particularly been the case for customers in industries such as construction, hospitality and retail who have been impacted by social distancing measures and had to revise down staff numbers working at any one time.

A further 1,900 businesses have been able to pause their premium payments whilst they work through financial hardship.

In addition, to these support measures, those customers who have contacted icare to reduce their wages due to COVID-19 impacts will have these reduced wages applied to their 2020-21 policy renewal with no adjustments for inflation.

But the support doesn't end with premium relief.

icare has also been assisting businesses with managing claims during the pandemic to ensure injured workers and employers experience as little disruption to services as possible.

A team of specialist case managers and legal experts has been formed to assist workers who have contracted COVID-19 through their employment and help employers navigate these types of claims in accordance with workers insurance legislation.

There is also a range of COVID-19 information on the icare website that is regularly updated to support our customers.

This includes information on how COVID-19 claims are assessed, as well as FAQs and additional factsheets and resources to support employers, workers, health providers and others during COVID-19.

The fact sheets cover a range of topics such as managing stress for remote teams, the importance of sleep for workers, and, the importance of compassion when working from home.

Meanwhile, icare's Injury Prevention team has been working directly with impacted customers, providing a range of tools and resources to help NSW businesses keep their people safe during COVID-19.

These include checklists and fact sheets which take businesses through what they should be thinking about when it comes to inducting new staff and managing risk in these changed ways of working.

A series of icare webinars on topics such as managing customer aggression within the context of COVID-19 have also proved useful for businesses during these challenging times.

Businesses can obtain recordings of the webinars, as well as take away activities, by visiting the icare website.

A range of valuable information on keeping your workers safe during COVID-19 is also available on the Safe Work Australia website (<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces>).

For more information on COVID-19 support for businesses and their employees in general, visit icare's dedicated COVID-19 web page (<https://www.icare.nsw.gov.au/icare-coronavirus-information/#gref>).

COVID-19: Federal Government Provides \$1.8 Billion Boost to Local Government

Adapted from Media Release, the Hon Scott Morrison, Prime Minister, the Hon Michael McCormack Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and the Hon Mark Coulton, Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government 21 May 2020

The Federal Government has committed an allocation of \$1.8 billion for road and community projects through local governments across Australia.

This allocation comprises a new \$500 million Local Road and Community Infrastructure Program and the bringing forward of \$1.3 billion of the 2020-21 Financial Assistance Grant payment will also help communities battling the effects of COVID-19.

'Our funding boost will help councils accelerate priority projects that will employ locally and support local business and also stimulating our economy' Prime Minister, Scott Morrison said.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack said supporting councils to improve local roads and community infrastructure would have lasting economic and social benefits for communities.

'This package will improve road safety and bolster the resilience of our local road networks, which will get Australians home sooner and safer, no matter where they live,' he said.

Mr McCormack said projects could include constructing or improving bridges, tunnels, street lighting and rest areas.

Fall in Port Botany Container Volumes Worsens

Container volumes through Port Botany continued to drift downward in April compared to April 2019, according to figures released by NSW Ports.

In summary:

- exports were down by 9.4 per cent to 95,895 TEU with full exports down by 8.86 per cent and empties down by 9.76 per cent
- imports were down by 10.18 per cent to 98,916 TEU with full imports down by 9.76 per cent and empties, which make up about one per cent of imports, down by 40 per cent.

Imports of miscellaneous manufactured produces and machinery, which, together account for about one third of import volumes, were down almost 28 per cent and 14 per cent respectively.

This suggests the impact of COVID-19 on trade volumes through Port Botany continues to grow.

TEUs exported through Port Botany in March were down by 10.5 per cent compared to March 2019, while TEUs imported were down by 1.2 per cent.

NSW Government Fast Tracks Approval of New 850 Hectare Mamre Rd Industrial Area

The NSW Government has fast tracked approval of a new 850 hectare Mamre Precinct industrial area rezoning.

On 28 April, the NSW Government announced the first 24 projects to undergo a fast-tracked assessment process as part of its new Planning System Accreditation Program.

A further 24 projects, including the Mamre Precinct Rezoning, were announced in the second tranche of the program on 22 May.

According to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, the purpose of this program to accelerate the assessment and determination of projects that inject investment into the NSW economy and keep people in jobs during COVID-19.

It says the usual planning rules and policies will apply, and all projects will be assessed under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Indicative boundaries of new industrial precinct are the Warragamba pipeline to the north, Luddenham and South Creek to the west, the proposed Western Sydney Airport and Kemps Creek to the south-west and Mt Vernon to the south-east.

This new industrial precinct sits within the boundaries of Penrith City Council.

The plan includes protection of a potential intermodal terminal site and a Southern Link Rd corridor east of Mamre Rd.

Developers with an interest in this new industrial area are Mirvac, Frasers Property, Fife Capitol, Dexus, Altis property partners, Stockland, GPT Group and ESR.

A map of the approved industrial area is available at https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/Exhibition+attachments+/Mamre+Road/Draft_Mamre_Road_Structure_Plan.pdf.

Biosecurity Levy Abandoned

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment has advised that following industry consultation and further consideration of the impacts on industry, the Australian Government has made the decision not to proceed with the Onshore Biosecurity Levy.

It says an alternative levy will not be explored or progressed.

The department said it undertook a co-design process with industry to develop a levy model that was practical for industry and the government.

This process highlighted that a levy could not be implemented without significant regulatory impacts on industry and proposed levy payers.

The original decision to introduce the levy was made in the 2018-19 Federal Budget.

Infrastructure Update

Access, Church St Parramatta between Lennox Bridge and Victoria Rd from 29 May

Parramatta Light Rail has advised the following traffic changes on Church St between Lennox Bridge and Victoria Rd from 8pm, Friday, 29 May.

- Church St between Market St and Victoria Rd will be changed to one-way in a northerly direction.
- Vehicles travelling southbound along Church St will need to detour left or right at Victoria Rd.
- Motorists will need to use Marist Pl and Market St, or Sorrell and Palmer Sts, to access this area.
- All vehicles will need to enter the building at Novotel via Market St.
- Parking along Market St will be maintained but zoning adjusted.

Access to businesses for deliveries and collections will change.

Please consult directly with your client regarding new access arrangements.

Access, Macquarie St Parramatta between Lennox Bridge and Victoria Rd from 5 June

Parramatta Light Rail has advised that Macquarie St Parramatta will be closed between Smith and Marsden Sts from 6pm, Friday, 5 June to 6am, Tuesday 9 June for the installation of utilities.

Detour is via George and Phillip Sts to travel westbound.

Access to Macquarie St from Horwood Pl will be temporarily closed.

Local access will be provided to United La and Church St through prior consultation.

Closure, M7 Motorway to M4 Motorway Eastbound and Westbound On Ramps at Eastern Creek from 31 May

Transport for NSW has advised that the M7 Motorway to M4 Motorway eastbound and westbound on ramps at Eastern Creek will be closed for up to 21 nights between Sunday, 31 May and Saturday, 27 June from 9pm to 5am.

Closure, M4 Motorway: Reservoir Rd Westbound On Ramp, 27 May

Transport for NSW has advised that the Reservoir Rd westbound on ramp on the M4 Motorway will be closed for one night on Wednesday 27 May between 10pm and 4am.

Closure, M4 Motorway: Cumberland Hwy Westbound On Ramp, 28 May

Transport for NSW has advised that the Cumberland Hwy westbound on ramp on the M4 Motorway will be closed for one night on Thursday 28 May between 10pm and 4am.

Upgrading, Widening, M1 Pacific Motorway Southbound Between Doyalson and Tuggerah, 26 May

Transport for NSW has advised that the upgraded and widened southbound section of the M1 Motorway between Tuggerah and Doyalson opens to three lanes from Tuesday 26 May.

The existing speed limit of 80km/h will remain in place for the safety of workers and road users as the remaining finishing works are completed.

Transport for NSW advises stakeholders will be notified when the northbound section of the project opens to three lanes in the coming days.

Heavy vehicles should continue to follow road signs and remain in the left lane.

Upgrading, Widening, M1 Pacific Motorway Southbound Between Doyalson and Tuggerah, 27 May

Transport for NSW has advised that major construction has been completed on the M1 upgrade between the Kariang and Somersby interchanges, with the last section of the upgraded and widened southbound lanes of the M1 opening to 110km/h.

Work to prepare for the change will take place between 8pm and 5am from Wednesday 27 May.

From early Thursday 28 May, the southbound section of the M1 will return to 110km/h.

Minor finishing work will take place at night following this opening, and reduced speed limits will apply during these night works for the safety of workers and all road users.

Heavy vehicles should continue to follow road signs and remain in the left lane.

Reopening, Main West Rail Line, 23 May

A reminder that the main west rail line is now back to full capacity from 23 May following the rebuild of track infrastructure following extensive damage caused by bushfires and flooding between Mt Victoria and Lithgow.

Eight Week Closure, Lawrence Hargrave Dr, Stanwell Park, from 15 June

Adapted from media release, Lee Evans MP, Member for Heathcote, 19 May 2020

Member for Heathcote, Lee Evans, has said that Transport for NSW will carry out slope repairs on Lawrence Hargrave Dr at Stanwell Park.

Mr Evans said the road will be closed 24 hours a day for eight weeks from 9am, Monday 15 June until 7pm, Sunday 9 August.

Lawrence Hargrave Dr will be closed in both directions between Lady Wakehurst Dr/Otford Rd and Chellow Dene Ave.

Detours will be in place via Bulli Pass and the M1 Princes Motorway.

Closure, Bulli Pass, 27 May

Transport for NSW has advised that Bulli Pass will be closed in both directions between Lawrence Hargrave Dr and the M1 Princes Motorway on Wednesday 27 May between 9am and 3pm, weather permitting.

If delayed due to poor weather, work will be carried out on Friday, 29 May.

Detours will be in place via Lawrence Hargrave Dr or via the M1 Princes Motorway and Memorial Dr.

Changed Traffic Arrangements, Perricoota Rd, Moama, 27 May

Transport for NSW has advised that Perricoota Road will be closed to eastbound traffic travelling towards the Cobb Highway between Kirchhofer Street and the Cobb Highway from Wednesday 27 May to Friday 29 May, between 9.30am and 2.30pm, weather permitting.

Westbound traffic will be unaffected.

Heavy vehicles and motorists from Five Mile travelling eastbound on Perricoota Rd towards the Cobb Hwy will detour via Twenty Four La and Beer Rd.

Local traffic travelling eastbound on Perricoota Rd towards the Cobb Hwy will detour via Kirchhofer and Boyes Sts.

Other Road Works

Suburb/ Town	Road	Date/s	No of Shifts	Work Times
Beverly Hills	Stoney Creek Rd eastbound near Melvin St	21/5-19/6/20	5	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Camperdown	Parramatta Rd between Missenden Rd/ Lyons Rd and Barr St	24/5-3/7/20	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Mascot	Southern Cross Dr between Botany Rd and Wentworth Ave	1/6-30/7/20	10	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Naremburn	Cnr Willoughby Rd and Garland Rd	1/6-19/6/20	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
South Hurstville- Beverly Hills	King Georges Rd from Connells Point Rd to Stoney Creek Rd	21/5-3/8/20	50 50	7am-6pm Mon-Fri 8am-1pm Sat 8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Stanmore	Parramatta Rd westbound approaching Northumberland Ave	24/5-12/6/20	4	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Taren Point	Taren Point Rd north of Parraweena Rd intersection	12/5-19/6/20	4	8pm-5am Sun-Fri