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The Courier

Information and Advice for NSW Transport Operators

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COVID-19: Latest Snapshot

Source: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-current-situation-and-case-numbers> 30 April, 2020

There continue to be positive trends in Australia's management of COVID-19.

The following tables provide a snapshot of COVID-19 cases and virus management in Australia as at 3pm, 29 April 2020:

Cases, Deaths and Testing

Indicator	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Confirmed cases (number)	3016	1354	1034	551	438	220	106	27	6746
Deaths (number)	39	18	6	8	4	11	3	0	89
Cases Recovered (number)									5667
Cases in intensive care units (number)	17	9	6	4	2	0	0	0	38
Current Cases in Hospitals (number)	28	18	12	14	4	14	0	3	93
Tests conducted ('000)	212.7	111.1	105.0	36.5	55.4	10.9	8.4	4.4	544.4
Percentage of tests positive (%)	1.4	1.2	1.0	1.5	0.8	2.0	1.3	0.6	1.2

Cases by Source of infection

Source	Percentage
Overseas	63.7
Locally acquired – contact of a confirmed case	25.9
Locally acquired – contact not identified	10.1
Under investigation	0.3
Total	100.0

Five or six weeks ago, the number of new COVID-19 cases in Australia was doubling every 2 to 3 days. In the past week, there have been 109 new cases, an increase of 1.5% over the number of cases a week earlier.

There has also been:

- More people recovering from COVID-19 than new cases.
- Fewer hospitalisations.
- Maintenance of the effective reproduction rate of COVID-19 at a level below 1. A reproduction rate below 1 is an indicator of an effective COVID-19 control strategy.
- More testing to increase detection capability, which in Australia is regarded as very high.
- More effective contact tracing. (Contact tracing is the practice of identifying and monitoring individuals who may have had contact with an infectious person as a means of controlling the spread of a communicable disease of identifying and tracking down who somebody who has tested positive.)

Planning for a Recovery

Recent announcements from the Prime Minister and the Premier make it clear that both NSW and Australia are on the verge of moving to an easing of some restrictions which can be expected to generate increased economic activity.

The extent and timing of these are not yet clear and can be expected to be affected by the degree to which COVID-19 can be contained.

COVID-19: National Cabinet Agrees to National WHS Principles

On 24 April, National Cabinet agreed to develop national work health and safety guidance on COVID-19.

Guidance will be developed through Safe Work Australia and is intended to support businesses to operate safely within the COVID-19 environment.

National Cabinet also agreed to National COVID-19 Safe Workplace Principles that will underpin Safe Work Australia's guidance and provide consistent work health and safety advice that businesses can trust and follow in their operations.

They are:

1. All workers, regardless of their occupation or how they are engaged, have the right to a healthy and safe working environment.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic requires a uniquely focused approach to work health and safety (WHS) as it applies to businesses, workers and others in the workplace.
3. To keep our workplaces healthy and safe, businesses must, in consultation with workers, and their representatives, assess the way they work to identify, understand and quantify risks and to implement and review control measures to address those risks.
4. As COVID-19 restrictions are gradually relaxed, businesses, workers and other duty holders must work together to adapt and promote safe work practices, consistent with advice from health authorities, to ensure their workplaces are ready for the social distancing and exemplary hygiene measures that will be an important part of the transition.
5. Businesses and workers must actively control against the transmission of COVID-19 while at work, consistent with the latest advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, including considering the application of a hierarchy of appropriate controls where relevant.
6. Businesses and workers must prepare for the possibility that there will be cases of COVID-19 in the workplace and be ready to respond immediately, appropriately, effectively and efficiently, and consistent with advice from health authorities.

7. Existing state and territory jurisdiction of WHS compliance and enforcement remains critical. While acknowledging individual variations across WHS laws mean approaches in different parts of the country may vary, to ensure business and worker confidence, a commitment to a consistent national approach is key, including a commitment to communicating what constitutes best practice in prevention, mitigation and response to the risks presented by COVID-19.
 8. Safe Work Australia (SWA), through its tripartite membership, will provide a central hub of WHS guidance and tools that Australian workplaces can use to successfully form the basis of their management of health and safety risks posed by COVID-19.
 9. States and territories ultimately have the role of providing advice, education, compliance and enforcement of WHS and will leverage the use of the SWA central hub in fulfilling their statutory functions.
 10. The work of the National COVID-19 Coordination Commission will complement the work of SWA, jurisdictions and health authorities to support industries more broadly to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic appropriately, effectively and safely.
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COVID-19: State Insurance Regulator Announces JobCover6 Support for Injured Workers Returning to Work

The State Insurance Regulatory Agency has established JobCover6 as an initiative to support workers recovering at work during the COVID-19 period.

SIRA says research shows that work promotes recovery and reduces the risk of long-term disability and work loss.

It says the NSW workers compensation system is focussed on supporting workers to recover at or return to work after work-related injury.

It says JobCover6 has been developed in recognition of the economic and business impacts of COVID-19 and can be accessed during the pandemic period.

SIRA says JobCover6 helps workers locate suitable work where ongoing employment cannot be secured with a new employer during the COVID-19 period.

Support is provided for up to 6 months' duration to a worker recovering from a work-related injury, where the worker is looking for new employment.

Benefits include:

- Incentive payments of up to \$10,400 for up to 6 months.
- Exemption of the worker's wages from their workers compensation premium calculation for two years.
- Protection against the costs of changes to the worker's existing injury for up to two years.

Further information, including eligibility criteria, is available from <https://www.sira.nsw.gov.au/resources-library/workers-compensation-resources/publications/help-with-getting-people-back-to-work/jobcover6-supporting-recovery-at-work-during-the-covid-19-period>.

Increase in CPI in the March 2020 Quarter

The Consumer Price Index measured on a seasonally adjusted basis rose by 2.2 per cent in the year ending 31 March, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

This compares to 1.8 per cent increase in the CPI for the year ending 31 December.

This puts Australia's inflation rate back in the Reserve Bank of Australia's target band of 2-3 per cent for the first time in about five years.

The ABS said higher CPI was driven by significant price rises in vegetables, secondary education and pharmaceutical products.

Automotive fuel prices fell by 6 per cent over the quarter.

Fall in Port Botany Container Trade in March

Figures released by NSW Ports show a fall of just over 6.2 per cent in the number of containers passing through Port Botany in March, when measured on a 20 foot equivalent unit basis, compared to the corresponding month in 2019.

Full exports fell by almost 6.8 per cent while empty exports fell by just over 13.1 per cent. Total exports fell by just over 10.5 per cent to 94,200.

Imports held up quite well with volumes down just over 1.2 per cent to 88,795. Full imports fell by 1.5 per cent.

Container movements through Port Botany are down by just over 6 per cent for the nine months ending 31 March compared to the corresponding period in 2018-19.

Vale Frank Johnston

Frank Johnston, former Managing Director, Johnstons Transport Industries, passed away on 23 April. He was 72.

Frank was on the Executive of the old NSW Road Transport Association for many years and was inaugural President of the Australian Trucking Association NSW Branch, now Road Freight NSW.

He stepped down from that role a few years ago.

Frank was very generous both in cash and in kind to the associations of he was a member.

Senior executives in Johnstons were also always generous with their time, were active in association committees and, like Frank, worked for the good of the industry.

Frank W Johnston Pty Ltd was established in Sydney in 1900.

Frank's son, Jeffrey, now runs the business which is based in Smithfield.

May he rest in peace.

Infrastructure Update

Port Botany Rail Line

Adapted from media release, The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Senator The Hon Mathias Cormann MP, Minister for Finance, 29 April, 2020

Work to upgrade and improve the standard and performance of the existing Port Botany rail line has been completed, according to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack.

Additional improvement work to the line included upgrades to Chullora Junction.

Mr McCormack also announced additional funding for the Botany Rail Duplication between Mascot and Botany and for a new passing loop at Cabramatta.

Mr McCormack and Senator Cormann said duplicating the remaining 2.9-kilometre single freight rail track section of the Botany Line and constructing the Cabramatta Loop project will allow freight trains up to 1,300 metres in length to pass each other.

The ministers said the Botany Rail Duplication and the Cabramatta Loop will improve rail capacity and service reliability to and from Port Botany, while alleviating constraints and increase the capacity of Sydney's freight rail network, which supports the logistics and supply chain activities of intermodal terminals such as at Enfield, Moorebank, Minto and Chullora.

Scone By-Pass

The Scone by-pass has been completed and is open to traffic.

The Northern Rd

The upgraded 5.5km section of The Northern Rd between Mersey Rd Bringelly and Eaton Rd Luddenham has been completed.