



New South Wales Branch

PO Box 277

HURSTVILLE NSW 2220

Tel: 0412 880861

Fax: 02 9579 2333

Email: hughmc@artionsw.com.au

The Courier

Information and Advice for NSW Transport Operators

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Reserve Bank Says Global Coronavirus Impact Underpinned Rate Cut Decision

Adapted from Statement, Philip Lowe, Governor, Reserve Bank of Australia, 3 March, 2020

The Board of the Reserve Bank of Australia decided to lower the cash rate by 0.25 per cent to 0.5 per cent at its meeting on 3 March.

In its Statement accompanying its decision, the RBA said the coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) clouded the outlook for the global economy, meaning a global economic slowdown was likely with adverse impacts on the Australian economy.

The RBA said it is too early to tell how persistent COVID-19 will be and, therefore, its impact on the global economy.

However, it said policy measures are being implemented in major world economies to support economic growth.

The RBA said the fall in the value of the Australian dollar will support the Australian economy by and make exporters relatively more competitive.

It also reassured Australians that Australia's financial markets are functioning effectively.

The RBA said the adverse consequences of COVID-19 were most notable in the tourism and education sectors of the economy with adverse flow on impacts to domestic spending.

As a result, it forecasts GDP growth in the March 2020 quarter “is likely to be noticeably weaker than earlier expected” – see further detail below.

It said that once COVID-19 is contained, the Australian economy can be expected to return to normal growth patterns.

The RBA also noted that the unemployment rate remained above its goal of 4.5 per cent, that rate wages growth has flatlined and that inflation remains under the RBA’s target 2-3 per cent range.

It will monitor house price trends to ensure they do not rise too quickly.

It also notes credit conditions for small to medium businesses remain tight and demand for credit from investors remains subdued.

Given the global impact of COVID-19 is expected to delay progress towards the RBA’s full employment and inflation targets, it felt it was appropriate to lower the cash rate in an attempt to stimulate economic activity.

It also said it is prepared to take further measures, if necessary, to provide further support to the Australian economy.

Banks Respond Quickly to Reserve Bank Decision

Australia’s four major banks responded quickly to the decision by the Board of the Reserve Bank of Australia to lower the cash rate by 0.25 per cent to 0.5 per cent at its meeting on 3 March by passing on this rate cut in full.

Here is what they had to say in separate media releases issued on 3 March:

ANZ

ANZ Group Executive Australia Retail & Commercial Mark Hand said: “The decision by the Reserve Bank to reduce the cash rate to historically low levels highlights the significant impact the outbreak of COVID-19 is already having on the global economy.

“While there were a range of factors considered in making this decision, ANZ is prepared to play its role in supporting both our customers and the broader economy through this period of uncertainty.”

CBA

Angus Sullivan, Group Executive Retail Banking Services said: “In responding to this latest official interest rate cut we have examined the important role we play in supporting the Australian economy and the unique set of circumstances facing the country.

“We also recognise the importance of managing the business sustainably for the long term and balancing the needs of borrowers and depositors. We will continue to review our pricing and make further adjustments as required.”

NAB

NAB Chief Customer Officer Consumer Banking Mike Baird said the decision would support households and encourage cashflow into the economy.

“In making these decisions we have had to consider the unprecedented challenges of the low interest-rate environment and impacts of the bushfires and coronavirus outbreak on our customers and the broader economy,” he said.

“NAB has a track record of seeing our customers through difficult economic conditions and we will continue to lend and support our customers.”

Westpac

“We recognise that COVID-19 will have a direct impact on our nation’s economy and we want to provide additional support to our small business and home loan customers at this unprecedented time,” David Lindberg, Westpac Chief Executive, Consumer said.

“This will give our variable home loan and small business customers more money in their back pocket.”

Australian Economy Grew by 2.1 Per Cent in 2019

The Australian economy grew by 2.1 per cent in 2019, according to the latest figures released on 4 March by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

This follows growth in the economy 0.5 per cent in the December quarter 2019.

Economic growth was underpinned by a pick up in household discretionary spending and continued increases in the provision of government services.

However, falls in dwelling investment continued, maintaining a trend evident in the past 18 months.

The mining sector contributed to economic growth with production volumes up 1.6 per cent in the December quarter and 7.3 per cent through the year.

However, falling prices for key export commodities had an adverse impact on economic growth.

The contribution to economic growth from wage rises was offset by a fall in company profits.

March Quarter Economic Outlook

Commonwealth Treasury and the Reserve Bank of Australia estimate that the recent bushfires will take 0.2 per cent off economic growth in the March 2020 quarter.

A further 0-5 per cent can be expected to be lost from economic growth due to the adverse consequences for the education and tourism sectors arising from COVID-19. This estimate does not consider the impact of COVID-19 on global supply chains.

EPA Fines Transport Operator for Fumigation Breaches

Adapted from media release, Karen Marler, Regional Director, NSW Environmental Protection Authority, 27 February, 2020

The NSW Environment Protection Authority has fined transport operator, Crawfords Freightlines Pty Ltd, \$15,000 after the company allegedly carried out fumigation activities outside licenced hours, potentially putting the community and environment at risk.

The EPA said the company operates a log fumigation business at Werris Creek, treating softwood logs by fumigating them with pesticides for insect control prior to shipping to overseas markets.

Following a complaint in November 2019 that the premises was fumigating outside licenced hours, the EPA launched an investigation.

EPA Regional Director North, Karen Marler, said the EPA alleges that Crawfords breached two conditions of their Environment Protection Licence which regulates the times when fumigation can be carried out on the premises.

“Conducting fumigation activities outside licenced hours has the potential to cause harm to the community and environment,” Ms Marler said.

Ms Marler said penalty notices are one of a number of tools the EPA can use to achieve environmental compliance including formal warnings, official cautions, licence conditions, notices and directions and prosecutions.

She said the notice recipient may pay the penalty notice, seek a review, or elect to have the matter determined by a court.

For more information about the EPA's regulatory tools, visit the EPA Compliance Policy at www.epa.nsw.gov.au/legislation/prosguid.htm.

Flu Vaccine Expected to be Available in NSW in Mid April

The NSW Government has advised that the 2020 flu vaccine is expected to be available in NSW from mid-April.

It says it will be specifically tailored to the flu strains that are expected to pose the greatest risk.

While the vaccine will help reduce the severity and spread of flu, which can lower a person's immunity and make them susceptible to other illnesses, it won't protect against COVID-19.

Flu shots are free for certain sections of the population, including people aged 65 years and over, pregnant women and Indigenous Australians.

NHVR Wants to Know How Supply Chain Participants Tackle Safety Responsibilities

Adapted from media release, Sal Petrocitto, CEO, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, 2 March, 2020

The NHVR has released a survey into how the heavy vehicle industry and supply chain is tackling their safety responsibilities.

NHVR CEO Sal Petrocitto said that the online safety survey would allow the NHVR to continue to develop programs to support operators to meet their safety duties.

"We are continually pursuing programs to improve heavy vehicle safety," Mr Petrocitto said.

"The past 18 months has seen significant changes with the introduction of safety duties provisions in the Heavy Vehicle National Law, and we want to understand how these changes have impacted everyday safety practices.

"We want to hear from everyone across the heavy vehicle supply chain — including directors, operators, drivers, loaders, consignors and beyond — about what steps they are taking to manage heavy vehicle safety.

"What we learn from the survey will help us decide how best to direct our efforts to further boost safety."

The NHVR released a range of templates and information through Safety Management Systems in 2018 and endorsed the Registered Industry Code of Practice last year. This follows changes to Chain of Responsibility laws in October 2018.

The survey is voluntary and responses are confidential. It will be conducted by independent research company Insync and take about 10 minutes to complete.

Operators can complete the survey until 31 March.

To complete the survey, visit <https://secure.insyncsurveys.com.au/surveys/NHVRSS2020/Kiosk/?page=1>

Federal Government Announces Review of Industrial Relations System

The Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, has tasked Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations, Christian Porter, to review take a fresh look at the industrial relations system to identify how it is operating

and where there are impediments to shared gains for employers and to identify how it is operating and where there are impediments to shared gains for employers and employees”.

A discussion paper has been released which canvasses a number of questions related to the scope of the Fair Work Ombudsman’s compliance and enforcement tools, including existing powers related in information gathering, various types of notices, enforceable undertakings, whether to commence litigation and entering into compliance partnerships with a business through a compliance deed as well as issues related to wage redress for recovering underpayments.

icare Publishes Workers Insurance Claims Data

icare has published its latest figures on Workers Insurance claims performance data.

Key insights to the data include:

- Return to work: 82% at 26 weeks: The 26-week return to work rate has continued to improve in recent months climbing to a 15-month high of 82% in October and November 2019.
- Liability decision timeliness: 99% within 7 days. The timeliness of initial liability decisions has continued to improve and to exceed icare’s target of 95% of decisions made within 7 days.

Further information is available from <https://icare.nsw.gov.au/about-us/statistics/icare-workers-insurance-claims-performance-data/>.

Infrastructure Australia Outlines Priorities for 2020

On 26 February, Infrastructure Australia released its priorities for 2020.

Transport priorities relevant to NSW and the ACT include:

High Priority projects:

- M4 Motorway upgrade, Parramatta to Lapstone.
- Sydney metro – city and south-west.
- Western Sydney Airport.

Priority projects:

- Melbourne-Brisbane inland rail.
- Nowra bridge.

High Priority initiatives:

- WestConnex – St Peters to Sydney Airport/Port Botany.
- Public transport initiatives:
 - Congestion on Parramatta Rd and Victoria Rd.
 - Sydney rail network capacity.
 - Connectivity between inner southern suburbs and Sydney CBD.
 - Connectivity between Sydney CBD and Parramatta CBD (Sydney metro west).
- Port Botany rail line duplication.
- Chullora junction upgrade.
- Corridor preservation – Western Sydney freight line and intermodal terminal, Eastern Creek.
- Corridor preservation – Outer Sydney Orbital road and rail/M9, and Castlereagh connection corridor – future connectivity, Western Sydney to Central Coast/Illawarra.
- Corridor preservation Western Sydney Airport rail connections.

There are also 20 road and rail Priority Initiatives, including:

- Sydney CBD motorways optimisation.
- Prospect Hwy capacity.
- A3 and A6 corridor capacity – southern Sydney/Ryde Rd.

- M6 Motorway connectivity – Waterfall to the Sydney motorway network.
 - Western harbour tunnel – Northern Beaches link.
 - Newell Hwy upgrade.
 - Coffs Harbour bypass, Pacific Hwy.
 - Extension of M1 Pacific Motorway to Raymond Terrace.
 - Road network upgrades, Moorebank International Terminal.
 - Great Western Hwy improvements – Katoomba to Lithgow.
 - Princes Hwy safety and capacity – Nowra to Victorian Border.
 - New England Hwy upgrade.
 - Picton Rd safety and capacity.
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icare Mobile Engagement Team Insurance Forums

icare has announced that its icare Mobile Engagement Team will be holding forums in Sydney to talk to employers, providers, brokers, local councils and industry groups across NSW.

According to icare, their Mobile Engagement Team provides information, updates and tailored education on everything to do with icare, and the NSW workers compensation scheme through a combination of Forums, Workshops, Conferences and Pop-up offices.

Forums are being held in Mascot on 11 March and Penrith on 26 March.

There will be optional targeted sessions running after the conclusion of the main day with transport and storage to be targeted in Mascot.

To register for icare's Mascot forum, please visit <https://eventbrite.com.au/e/icare-workers-insurance-forum-mascot-tickets-90894167903>.

To register for icare's Penrith forum, please visit <https://eventbrite.com.au/e/icare-workers-insurance-forum-penrith-tickets-93452704555>.

A full list of icare's events in 2020 is available at <https://www.icare.nsw.gov.au/Met-events>.

TCA Says Tramanco Offers Future Ready Intelligent Mass Capability with New On-Board Mass System

Adapted from media release, Transport Certification Australia, 26 February, 2020

Transport Certification Australia has announced that Tramanco is the first to be type-approved for a new generation of smart on-board mass system.

It says smart OBM systems are capable of collecting and sharing axle mass data with other telematics systems and services, and heralds the introduction of Intelligent Mass through the National Telematics Framework.

TCA says that by leveraging common digital infrastructure, such as the Telematics Data Dictionary and the Telematics Data Exchange, these OBM systems can be used across all applications of the Framework.

Roger Sack, Managing Director of Tramanco, said that the smart CHEK-WAY Eliminator OBM system is an Australian product with a good return on investment, demonstrating repeatable accuracy and longevity.

He said that the CHEK-WAY Eliminator has now been further developed to support the demands for data for a range of purposes across the transport sector, as well as supporting new applications like the Telematics Monitoring Application.

TCA says that the Department of Transport in Victoria has already announced the use of smart (Category B or C) type-approved OBM systems for High Productivity Freight Vehicles and that the Tasmanian Department

of State Growth requires new generation type-approved OBM systems for 30-m A-Double and 30m-B-Double PBS vehicles.

Reminder: Fines and Demerit Points Now Apply to Drivers Caught on Camera Illegally Using a Mobile Phone

ARTIO NSW reminds Members that from 1 March 2020, drivers caught on camera illegally using their mobile phone will be issued fines and demerit points.

Detection cameras have been operating in warning mode since 1 December 2019, but drivers caught breaking the law will now incur a \$344 fine and five demerit points.

Minister for Roads, Andrew Constance, said 9 million vehicles had been checked by the cameras during the three-month warning period, with more than 30,000 warning letters issued to offending drivers.

NSW Police continue to enforce illegal mobile phone use and issue infringements as part of regular operations.

Road Works Update

Corner Princes Hwy and Campbell St, St Peters, 6 March

Campbell St St Peters will be closed between 7pm, Friday, 6 March and 8am, Saturday, 7 March between the Princes Hwy and May St.

A contra flow will be in place along the Princes Hwy between Sydney Park Rd and Silver St between 7.30pm, Friday, 6 March and 7.30am, Saturday, 7 March.

Newly installed traffic lights will be operational at the corner of the Princes Hwy and Campbell St from 9pm, Friday 6 March, permitting:

- Right turns northbound and southbound from the Princes Hwy onto Campbell St.
- Right turns eastbound and westbound from the Campbell St onto the Princes Hwy.
- Left turn southbound from the Princes Hwy onto Campbell St.

M7 Motorway Southbound and Northbound Off Ramps to the M4 Motorway to 27 March

Ramp closures on the four M7 Motorway off ramps will be closed, Sunday to Thursday nights inclusive, 9pm to 4am.

Both the M7 and M4 motorways will remain open.

M5 Motorway East Closure, General Holmes Dr to King Georges Rd, 8-11 March

The M5 Motorway East will be closed westbound between General Holmes Dr and King Georges Rd, for three nights from 8-10 March between 10pm and 5am.

The M5 Motorway East will also be closed eastbound between King Georges Rd and General Holmes Dr for four nights from 8-11 March between 9.30pm and 4.30am.

Pennant Hills Rd to M1 Motorway Northbound On Ramp Closure, 10 and 12 March

Ramp closures are planned for the M1 Motorway northbound on ramp from Pennant Hills Rd on the nights of Tuesday, 10 March and Thursday, 12 March, from 11pm to 4am.

M2 Motorway Eastbound Off Ramp to Pennant Hills Rd, to 18 March

Ramp closures are planned for the M2 Motorway eastbound off ramp to Pennant Hills Rd, Sunday to Thursday nights inclusive, 10pm to 5am, to 18 March.

Cahill Expressway, 1 March to 8 April Southbound

Scheduled road closures are in place on the Cahill Expressway between High St North Sydney and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel tolls from Sunday to Wednesday nights inclusive from 9pm to 4.30am from 1 March to 13 April.

Broughton Pass, 9 March

Broughton Pass on Wilton Rd will be closed in both directions from 7.30am to 4.30pm on 9 March.

Closure, Abbotsford Bridge, Yelta-Curlwaa, Night Work, 10 March to 8 May

Transport for NSW has advised it will carry out work on Abbotsford Bridge.

Initially, the bridge will be closed for night work from 11pm to 6am on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between Tuesday 10 March and Friday, 8 May 2020, weather permitting.

Although the bridge will be open to traffic during the day, there will be some temporary traffic changes and minor delays to ensure the work zone is safe.

During the night closures, traffic will be detoured via the George Chaffey Bridge between Mildura and Buronga.

The second stage of work will start in July 2020.

New section of East West Link opens to traffic

Adapted from media release, Member for Kiama, The Hon Gareth Ward MP, 3 March 2020

Road users will notice a change to their drive along the East West Link between Croome Rd and Woollybutt Dr, Albion Park Rail, with another 900 metres opened to traffic.

Member for Kiama Gareth Ward said the opening of the new section of road built upon the section of the East West Link that opened in 2019.

Mr Ward said the remainder of the East West Link to open later in 2020.

Traffic Changes, The Northern Rd, Bringelly

Transport for NSW has now completed part of the new northbound and southbound lanes of The Northern Road upgrade.

A new section of this road will open from Thames Rd, Bringelly to just north of Badgerys Creek Rd.

The existing intersection at Badgerys Creek Rd and The Northern Rd will be relocated around 100m south of its current location.

Transport for NSW will move traffic to this new section of The Northern Rd during the day shift on Wednesday, 11 March, weather permitting.

Overtaking Lanes at Bundaburrah Now Open

Adapted from media release, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, The Hon Paul Toole MP, 5 March, 2020

Road users can expect a safer and quicker drive along the Newell Hwy with two new overtaking lanes now open at Bundaburrah.

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole said the opening of the north and southbound overtaking lanes south of Forbes would provide more efficient journeys for motorists along the Newell.

"This project is being delivered as part of the NSW Government's \$500 million commitment to improve safety and travel times along the Newell Highway," Mr Toole said.

Other Road Works

| Suburb/ Town | Road | Date/s | No of Shifts | Work Times |
|-------------------------|--|---------------|-------------------------|---|
| Darlinghurst | Oxford St from Victoria St to South Dowling St/Barcom Ave overbridge | 10/3-8/5/20 | 10 | 9pm-5am Sun-Fri |
| Enfield | Cnr Coronation Pde and Hill St | 16/3-12/6/30 | 35 6 | 8pm-5am Sun-Fri 7am-6pm Mon-Fri 8am-1pm Sat |
| Guildford | Cnr Woodville and Guildford Rds | 7/3-24/4/20 | 7 | 8pm-5am Sun-Fri |

Economic and Industry Indicators

| Indicator/Source ¹ | As at | Unit of Measure | Quantity | Annual % Variation |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| GDP latest quarter (ABS) | Dec Qtr 2019 | \$m | 480,290 | 2.1 |
| CPI (ABS) | Dec Qtr 2019 | Per cent | | 1.8 |
| Cash rate (RBA) | Current | Per cent | 0.5 | |
| Estimated residential population (ABS) | 21 Feb 2020 | Million | 25,623 | 1.3 |
| Retail turnover (ABS) | Dec 2019 | \$m | 27,863 | 2.8 |
| Actual new capital expenditure (ABS) | Dec Qtr 2019 | \$m | 28,663 | -4.5 |
| Inventories held by private business (ABS) | Dec 2019 | \$m | 164,956 | -0.8 |
| Dwelling unit approvals (ABS) | Jan 2020 | Number | 14,229 | -6.7 |
| Manufacturers Income (ABS) | Dec 2019 | \$m | 84,029 | -1.3 |
| TEUs Port Botany (NSW Ports) | 7 months to Jan 2020 | Number | 1,525,618 | -5.2 |
| Employed persons (ABS) | Jan 2020 | Million | 12.997 | 2.0 |
| Unemployment rate (ABS) | Jan 2020 | Per cent | 5.2 | 0.1 |
| Wage price Index (ABS) | Dec Qtr 2019 | Per cent | | |
| All employees | | | | 2.2 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | | | | 2.3 |
| New motor vehicle sales (FCAI) | Feb 2020 | Number | 79,940 | -8.2 |
| Heavy commercial vehicle sales (FCAI) | Feb 2020 | Number | 2,465 | -8.2 |
| Light commercial vehicle sales (FCAI) | Feb 2020 | Number | 15,523 | -21.7 |
| AIP Terminal Gate Price-Diesel-Sydney | 6 Mar 2020 | Cents/litre incl. GST | 122.4 | -11.9 |

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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