



Australian Road Transport  
Industrial Organisation

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# *The Courier*

*Information and Advice for NSW Transport Operators*

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## **Drivers Video-Recording Themselves Concerning says NSW Police Force**

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The NSW Police Force is alerting industry to what it says is increasing use by truck drivers of TikTok, a Chinese based social networking service, to record for mobile videos of themselves while driving.

Advice provided to industry by Chief Inspector Phillip Brooks, Stakeholder Manager, NSW Police Force Traffic and Highway Patrol Command is that transport operators need to develop policies and procedures related to this unsafe practice.

Further information on TikTok is available from [www.tiktok.com](http://www.tiktok.com).

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## **NHVR Announces a Fee Freeze**

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*Adapted from media release, Duncan Gay, Chair, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, 11 June 2020*

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator has announced it will freeze fee increases on all NHVR-provided services until January 2021.

NHVR Chair Duncan Gay said helping the industry through this difficult period had been a priority for the NHVR, with the fee freeze the latest in a series of initiatives aimed at assisting operators through the pandemic.

"We recognise this has been a tough period for many operators and now more than ever we want to encourage heavy vehicle businesses to focus on their safety and that of other road users," Mr Gay said.

The freeze will apply to all NHVAS module and nominated vehicle fees.

The fee freeze will also apply to permit applications.

Fees for Victorian escort services will also be frozen until January 2021, while the cost of a new Written Work Diary will remain at \$25 for 2020-21.

For the list of NHVR fees visit [www.nhvr.gov.au/law-policies/fee-schedule](http://www.nhvr.gov.au/law-policies/fee-schedule).

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## Tax Return Advice

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### **Advice, Australian Taxation Office**

The ATO has provided tax tips to help employees and small business with their 2019-2020 tax return.

The ATO recommends:

- Checking concessions at a glance to see if your business can take advantage of any tax concessions, such as immediate deductions for prepaid expenses or the Instant asset write-off at <https://www.ato.gov.au/Business/Small-business-entity-concessions/Concessions/Concessions-at-a-glance/?>
- Reporting all income, including cash, coupons and online payments.
- Keeping track of your expenses - you can only claim the business portion of expenses as business deductions.
- Keeping records and make a backup.

For employees, the ATO has industry-specific guides that will assist in correctly report income and allowances and claim deductions for work related expenses.

This includes:

- A truck driver guide located at <https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Income-and-deductions/in-detail/occupation-and-industry-specific-guides/truck-drivers---income-and-work-related-deductions/>; and
- An office worker guide located at <https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Income-and-deductions/In-detail/Occupation-and-industry-specific-guides/Office-workers---income-and-work-related-deductions/>.

For those experiencing difficulties with their tax affairs following the 2019-2020 bushfires, the ATO says it can work with you to get things back on track.

Business owners and individuals having difficulties meeting tax and super obligations can call the ATO, telephone, 1800 806 218, or visit [https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Dealing-with-disasters/In-detail/Specific-disasters/Bushfires-2019-20/?=redirected\\_bushfires](https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Dealing-with-disasters/In-detail/Specific-disasters/Bushfires-2019-20/?=redirected_bushfires) for more information.

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## **NSW Treasurer says NSW Economy to Contract by Ten Per Cent in the Six Months to 30 June**

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### **Adapted from Ministerial Statement, NSW Parliament, the Treasurer, the Hon Dominic Perottet MP, 16 June, 2020**

The Treasurer, Dominic Perottet, has told the NSW Parliament that the NSW economy is forecast to contract by around ten per cent in the six months ending 30 June.

In delivering his NSW COVID-19 Response, Mr Perottet said the slump in economic growth was underpinned by the effects of the drought, then the bushfires and then shut downs related to COVID-19.

Mr Perottet said NSW will be the hardest hit of Australia's jurisdictions because it is Australia's 'gateway to the world'. He said:

- Immigration has ground to a halt.
- Short term visitor arrivals in April are 99.7 per cent lower than in April 2019.
- There were ten overseas student arrivals in April, a fall of almost 100 per cent over April 2019.
- NSW accounts for 35 per cent of JobKeeper applications but only 32 per cent of Australia's GDP.

- 37 per cent of job losses have occurred in NSW.
- Employment in the June 2020 quarter is expected to fall by 275,000 compared to the June 2019 quarter which would lift the NSW unemployment rate to 7.75 per cent.
- The national household savings rate has increased from 3.5 per cent to 5.5 per cent due to economic uncertainty and low consumer confidence.
- Deflation, not inflation, is expected in the June 2020 quarter for the first time in 23 years.

To stimulate the NSW economy further, Mr Perottet announced:

- Additional grants of \$3,000 to small and medium sized enterprises to cover fit-out changes, cleaning equipment, staff retraining and digital transformation. These are on top of grants of \$10,000 already provided to SMEs.
- Free community preschools to 30 September.

He said further stimulus measures will be announced.

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## **Consultation to Take Place on a New Heavy Vehicle Charging System**

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The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications has released the Heavy Vehicle Road Reform Consultation Paper, *Proposed Changes to the Way Heavy Vehicle Charges are Set and Invested*.

This paper outlines a new system which it says would see stronger links between:

- What road users want and are prepared to pay for (as captured by the service level standards).
- What investments are planned and paid for by road users (through independent determination of what costs are recoverable from heavy vehicle users and independent price setting).
- The investment of heavy vehicle revenue back into the roads (by dedicating heavy vehicle revenue to road funding).

The Transport and Infrastructure Council, comprising Commonwealth, State and Territory infrastructure and transport ministers, has asked for public consultation on this proposed new system which aims to boost productivity and deliver better government investment in roads by giving users more of a say.

Governments have also agreed in principle that the new system will have four broad elements:

- National service standards will be established with road categories that each have levels of service covering safety, reliability and access. Related to this will be users' willingness to pay. Standards will be developed with all road users, including heavy vehicle users, and will guide all government road investments.
- Development of road expenditure plans by state and territory governments which will be assessed by an independent body or bodies will assess the plans using the service level standards to determine what costs of road investment are recoverable from heavy vehicle users.
- An independent body will then use the determination of what is recoverable from road expenditure plans and calculate heavy vehicles' share of the expenditure. It will use this to decide the national fuel-based Road User Charge rate, and recommend baseline registration charges for states and territories. Charges would be calculated using a forward-looking cost base.
- Revenue from heavy vehicle charges will be dedicated to road infrastructure. While road investments will also continue to be funded from general revenue, a steady and predictable stream of heavy vehicle funding dedicated to roads can help provide productivity benefits to the industry.

While governments have not yet agreed to implement these reforms, the Transport and Infrastructure Council and the Council on Federal Financial Relations, comprising Commonwealth, state and territory treasurers will, in 2020-21, consider options for potential reforms.

### **Industry Consultation**

Online workshops are being planned for July-August 2020 followed by wider consultation sessions and the opportunity to make written submissions may then be called for later in 2020.

Due to COVID-19 this consultation will be open ended with no closing date set until all interested parties have had the opportunity to engage.

Interested parties are invited to read the consultation paper which is available at <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/heavy/proposed-changes-consultation.aspx> and express interest in participating in online small group workshops.

To register your interest in attending a workshop session, or to make a written submission, please email [HVR@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:HVR@infrastructure.gov.au).

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## Further Measures Announced to Enhance Australia's Fuel Security

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***Adapted from media release, the Hon Angus Taylor MP, Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, 15 June 2020***

The Morrison Government is working with the Australian fuel industry to bolster Australia's domestic fuel security and ease pressures on the nation's refineries, according to Angus Taylor, Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction.

He said the Government has now opened a Request for Information process to identify opportunities to increase Australia's domestic fuel storage capacity which will inform the next steps for exploring storage opportunities, to be announced later in 2020.

He also said the Government is also working to support the local refining sector in both the short and medium term.

Temporary changes to the diesel standard will be allowed to ease the storage pressures currently being felt by refineries from the drop in demand for fuel products as a result of COVID-19.

He assured diesel users that high quality diesel will continue to be supplied to the retail market and the change will not affect the operation of vehicles, the environment, or health and safety.

Mr Taylor said the Government has also commenced a long-term strategic study of the refining industry which will assess the state of the industry and any required actions, with the objective of maintaining Australia's long-term fuel security.

He acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the impact that large, unexpected changes in fuel supply and demand can have on the fuel storage and refining sectors.

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## \$8m Allocated to Local Councils for Route Assessment Pilot

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***Adapted from joint media release, the Hon Scott Buchholz MP Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport and Sal Petrocchio, CEO, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, 9 June, 2020***

Work is now underway on an \$8 million project aimed at making it easier for local councils to support heavy vehicle operators to choose the most productive routes by making it easier for local councils to assess infrastructure such as bridge weight limits and heights.

Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport, Scott Buchholz, said that the Strategic Local Government Asset Assessment Project would include 12 councils nationwide in its pilot phase.

"This project will balance productivity and reduce movement risks by giving local councils access to engineers and other experts so they can make the best decisions about improving accessibility on these important routes," Mr Buchholz said

National Heavy Vehicle Regulator CEO, Sal Petrocchio, said that the NHVR would start work undertaking assessments with the local councils in the pilot.

"We're looking forward to kicking off this work in the coming weeks with a diverse group of councils from right across the country," Mr Petrocchio said.

He said the project will improve heavy vehicle access by identifying key heavy vehicle routes on local roads and assisting local governments with the management of their road asset data.

He said a central database will be provided that contains information on road assets making it easier for operators to use routes that can accommodate them.

The 12 local councils participating in the pilot include Bega Valley Shire Council, Cessnock City Council and Muswellbrook Shire Council.

A further nine local councils from Queensland, SA, Victoria and WA will also take part in the pilot.

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## Economic Update

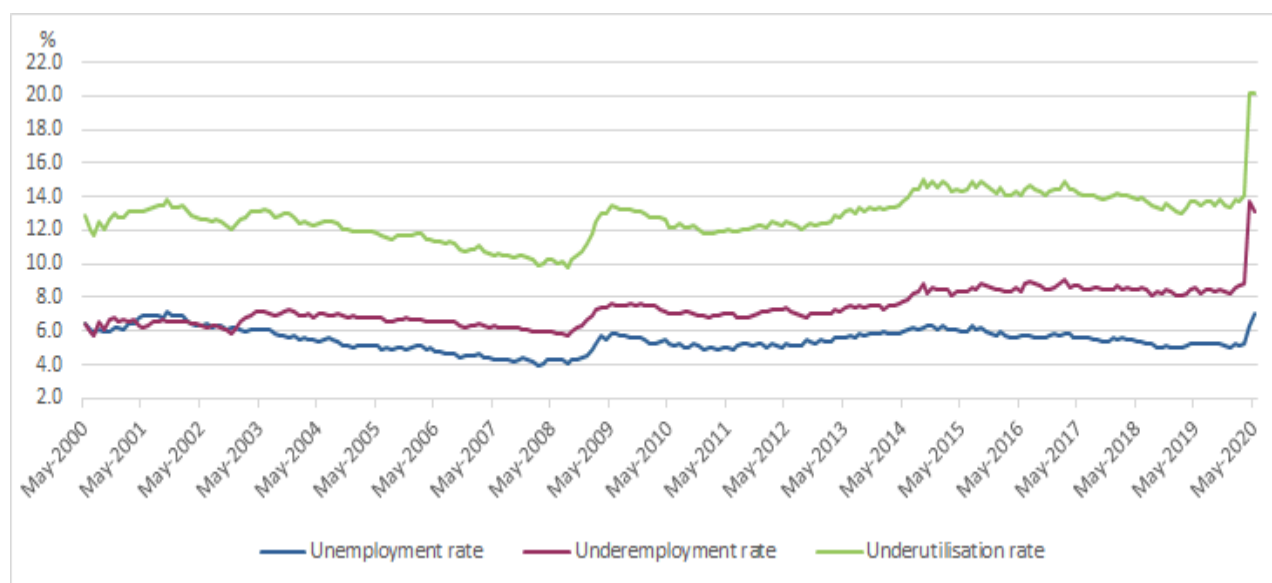
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### Sharp Fall in Employment Recorded in May

Although Australia's seasonally adjusted estimate of employment decreased by 227,700 people in May 2020 according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, it is clear that JobKeeper support, lower participation rates and sharp rises in both underemployment and underutilisation rates are masking the actual loss of jobs in the economy and hours worked in recent months.

The graph below, provided by the ABS, which contains 20 years of data on underutilisation, underemployment and unemployment clearly illustrates what is occurring in the labour market.

### UNDEREMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDERUTILISATION RATES



Since 2000, underutilisation has hovered between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of the labour market. In May, that figure rose by slightly over six percentage points from just under 14 per cent to 20.2 per cent, a figure similar to that recorded in April.

Over this 20 year time frame, underemployment has hovered between six per cent and nine per cent of the labour market. In April 2020, that figure rose from 8.5 per cent to 13.7 per cent. The underemployment rate fell to 13.1 per cent in May, a tentative sign of improvement in the labour market.

However, the following are signs that the labour market remains very soft:

- The participation rate, or the percentage of those aged 15 to 64 looking for work, fell from 65.9 per cent in March 2020 to 63.4 per cent in April to 62.9 per cent in May. In other words, three per cent of all Australians aged 15 to 64 have given up participating in the labour market in April and May.
- Official unemployment rose from 5.2 per cent in March to 6.2 per cent in April to 7.1 per cent in May.

The ABS has concluded that employment decreased by 594,000 people (4.6 per cent of the workforce) between March and April and by a further 227,700 people (1.8 per cent of the workforce) between April and May.

Compared to a year ago, there were 237,900 less people employed full-time and 457,700 less people employed part-time in May 2020.

### **Tentative Turnaround Evident in Jobs and Wages Evident in Late May**

Notwithstanding the figures above, further figures released by the ABS based on Australian Taxation Office data for the week ending 30 May point to a tentative growth in both jobs and total wages paid.

The ATO figures show:

- Jobs grew by 0.4 per cent across the economy and by 0.3 per cent in transport, postal and warehousing in the week ending 30 May. There are also signs of jobs growth in hard hit sectors, including accommodation and food services, however there is no jobs rebound yet in the arts and recreation sector. There was also a small fall in the number of jobs in the construction sector during the week ending 30 May.
- Total wages paid grew by 0.7 per cent across the economy and by 0.4 per cent in transport, postal and warehousing in the week ending 30 May, suggesting those in work were, on average, working more hours.
- Jobs grew by 0.7 per cent in NSW in the week ending 30 May while total wages paid grew by 1.4 per cent.
- Since lockdowns were imposed, the loss of jobs has been greatest in Tasmania, followed by Victoria, while the loss in terms of wages paid has been greatest in WA followed by Tasmania. The least affected jurisdictions have been the ACT and the NT.

### **Container Volumes Through Port Botany Remain Sluggish in May**

Figures released by NSW Ports show a fall in container volumes measured by TEUs in May 2020, compared to May 2019.

Total container volumes through Port Botany May 2020 fell to 196,432 TEU, compared to 213,771 TEU in May 2019, a drop of 8.1 per cent.

The biggest drop occurred in full exports, which were down by 15 per cent to 35,334 TEU. Full imports fell by 4.2 per cent to 97,027 TEU.

Container volumes through Port Botany for the 11 months to 31 May are down by 6.6 per cent compared to the same period in 2018-19, with full exports down by 5 per cent and full import down by 5.4 per cent. About half the fall in container volumes can be attributed to the export of empties.

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## **Infrastructure Update**

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### **Closure, M4 Motorway Eastbound and Westbound On Ramps at M4 Motorway, Eastern Creek**

Transport for NSW has advised that upcoming work on the M4 Motorway will require closing the M7 to M4 eastbound and westbound on ramps at Eastern Creek for up to 10 nights between Sunday 28 June and Friday 10 July from 9pm to 5am each night.

### **M1 Motorway, Tuggerah to Doyalson**

Transport for NSW has advised that changed traffic conditions are now in place on the M1 Motorway between the Tuggerah and Doyalson interchanges with the speed limit on both northbound and southbound lanes returning to 110km/h.

It says finishing works will take place at night and reduced speed limits will apply during these night works for the safety of workers and all road users.

It also says heavy vehicles should continue to follow road signs and remain in the left lane.

### **Hampden Bridge at Kangaroo Valley Closure from Sunday 21 June**

Transport for NSW has advised that Hampden Bridge will be closed in both directions for five nights on Sunday, 21 June to Thursday, 28 June between 7pm and 6am, weather permitting.

### **Great Western Hwy Upgrade West of Lithgow, from 17 June 2020**

*Adapted from media release, the Hon Paul Toole MP, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, 10 June 2020*

Work to improve safety on a 1.5km the Great Western Hwy 30km west of Lithgow at Diamond Swamp Road started on 17 June.

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole said work will take a month to complete, weather permitting, and will be carried out at night between 7pm and 6am from Monday to Saturday.

### **Installation, New Overtaking Lanes for Newell Hwy in the Warrumbungles**

***Adapted from media release, the Hon Paul Toole MP, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, 17 June 2020***

Work to instal new overtaking lanes on the Newell Hwy between Gilgandra and Coonabarabran has commenced.

Work will include building a new 1.5km overtaking lane at the bottom of Tap Hill and a one km overtaking lane at the top of the hill to close the gap between existing overtaking lanes, as well as the extension of an existing southbound overtaking lane at Redbank to 1.5km.

Work at Tap Hill has commenced, with work at Redbank starting mid-July.

Both projects are set to be completed in seven months, weather permitting.

Work will be carried out between 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 6pm on weekends.

### **Upgrade, Kidman Way, Hanwood, from 5 June 2020**

***Adapted from media release, Chris Gulaptis Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads and Infrastructure, 5 June 2020***

Upgrades have started on Kidman Way at Hanwood between Ben Martin Rd and McGann Rd Griffith.

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads and Infrastructure, Chris Gulaptis, said work commenced on 9 June and will be carried out between 7am and 6pm on weekdays, and between 8am and 4pm on Saturdays.

Work is expected to be completed in five weeks, weather permitting.

### **Grand Ave Camellia**

Parramatta Light Rail has advised that work will commence on Grand Ave Camellia later in June as part of the Parramatta Light Rail project.

It expects traffic disruption to last three months.

It says work hours will generally be 7pm to 7am but may also occur 7am to 7pm when traffic volumes are relatively low.

### **New M5 Tunnels to be Named M8 Motorway, to Open this Year**

WestConnex CEO, Andrew Head, says the WestConnex New M5 Tunnels will be renamed to the M8 Motorway when they open to traffic in the coming months.

Mr Head says the M8 features a new interchange at St Peters along with connections to Euston Rd, Campbell Rd and Gardeners Rd.

It will comprise twin 9km metre long tunnels which are 5.3m high.

He says that when the M8 opens, tolling will also begin on the M5 East.

Toll costs on the M8 are available using the WestConnex online toll calculator at [www.linkt.com.au/sydney/using-toll-roads/new-roads-toll-calculator](http://www.linkt.com.au/sydney/using-toll-roads/new-roads-toll-calculator).

### **Other Road Works**

Suburb/ Town	Road	Date/s	No of Shifts	Work Times
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Ultimo	Harris St and Bulwara St under Western Distributor overpass westbound	15/6-10/7/20	5 5	7am-6pm Mon-Fri 8pm-5am Sun-Thu
Vaucluse	Left hand turn Old South Head Rd into New South Head Rd	28/6-7/8/20	6	8pm-5am Sun-Thu