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The Courier

Information and Advice for NSW Transport Operators

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ARTIO NSW Christmas Office Arrangements

The ARTIO NSW office will close on 18 December and re-open on 5 January.

On behalf of the ARTIO NSW Committee, have a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Pacific Hwy Now Dual Carriageway

Adapted from media release, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack and Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole, 11 December 2020

After 20 years, Australia's biggest regional road project, duplication of the Pacific Hwy, is now complete, with the final section of the highway upgrade between Woolgoolga and Ballina now open to traffic.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack said the 15-kilometre section opened between Devils Pulpit and Woodburn marked the final link in the 657-kilometre Pacific Hwy duplication between Hexham and the Queensland border.

Mr McCormack said fatalities on the highway have fallen by more than 75 per cent since work began to make the entire length a four-lane dual carriageway.

"It's been a remarkable, history-making project and I look forward to seeing this downward trend continue in years to come as we work towards a zero road toll," Mr McCormack said.

NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole said the project has delivered an enduring legacy for the state and nation.

Minor finishing works will be carried out along sections of the Pacific Hwy into the New Year.

A total of \$15 billion was spent on the highway upgrade.

NHVR Calls for Nominations of Local Council Road Assets for Assessment

The NHVR is calling for the heavy vehicle industry to provide feedback and get involved by nominating assets on local government heavy vehicle routes for assessment under the NHVR's Strategic Local Government Asset Assessment Project (SLGAAP).

This follows completion of an initial Pilot Phase finished in mid-October, with 100 bridges and culverts assessed across 12 local government areas nationally.

Engineering reports from this Pilot for the assets provided access information for over 100 configurations, including Oversize Overmass vehicles, B-Doubles and Road Trains.

The NHVR said the Pilot:

- Confirmed that asset assessments significantly inform heavy vehicle access understanding and assist operators in planning their journeys.
- Assisted in validating the importance of a standardised framework to ensure consistent results across the road network.
- Established the minimum data requirements to undertake bridge and culvert assessments.
- Identified knowledge gaps, supporting the development of additional training materials for road managers.

For more information on how to nominate a bridge or culvert for assessment visit the SLGAAP website <https://www.nhvr.engagementhub.com.au/slgaap-asset-feedback> or email roadassetproject@nhvr.gov.au.

NHVR Calls for Comment on Revised National Heavy Vehicle Inspection Manual

The NHVR is undertaking a five-yearly review of the *National Heavy Vehicle Inspection Manual (NHVIM)* and is seeking input on the revised draft – NHVIM 3.0.

Consultation began on 7 December and feedback can be submitted until 29 January 2021 via the NHVIM feedback form which is available at https://www.nhvr.gov.au/nhvrsearch?search_terms=nhvim%20review.

Federal Government Announces Support for Oil Refineries

Adapted from media release, Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, Angus Taylor, 14 December, 2020

The Federal Government has announced support for local oil refineries as part of its commitment to Australia's long-term fuel security.

The Government has said it will provide relief to the refining sector by bringing forward the production payments announced as part of comprehensive fuel security package in the 2020-21 Budget, with support to begin on 1 January 2021.

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction Angus Taylor said the production payments will help the industry withstand the economic shock of this COVID-19 crisis, protecting local jobs and industry, bolstering our fuel security and shielding motorists from higher prices.

The support will be provided through a minimum one cent payment for each litre of primary transport fuel (petrol, diesel, and jet fuel) from the major domestic refineries which continue operations in Australia.

To receive the payment, refineries must agree to continue to operate for the duration of the program. Support is also contingent on refineries committing to an open book process and long-term self-help measures to further inform the development of the long-term package.

The first six months of the production payment will be funded by the Australian Government, with the package worth \$83.5 million.

The long-term market mechanism for the production payment will come into effect no later than 1 July 2021.

The Government is continuing to work with industry to finalise the market mechanism design in the coming months.

Insolvency Reforms Pass Federal Parliament

Adapted from media release, Josh Frydenberg, Treasurer and Michael Sukkar, Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer, 10 December, 2020

The Federal Government has announced the passage of legislation to reforms to Australia's insolvency framework.

The legislation introduces a new, simplified debt restructuring process that can be accessed by small businesses experiencing distress.

This process draws on key features of the Chapter 11 bankruptcy model in the United States and will apply to incorporated businesses with liabilities of less than \$1 million – covering around 76 per cent of businesses subject to insolvencies today, 98 per cent of whom who have less than 20 employees.

By moving from a rigid one-size-fits-all “creditor in possession” model to a more flexible “debtor in possession” model, eligible small businesses can restructure their existing debts while remaining in control of their business.

A new simplified liquidation pathway will also be introduced to allow faster and lower-cost liquidation, increasing returns for creditors and employees.

These new insolvency processes will be available for eligible small businesses from 1 January 2021.

Complementary measures to enable more practitioners to enter the profession are also being implemented.

High Court Dismisses ACCC's Pacific National Appeal

Adapted from media release, ACCC, 8 December, 2020

The High Court of Australia has dismissed the ACCC's application for special leave to appeal from the Full Federal Court's decision that Pacific National's acquisition of the Acacia Ridge terminal from Aurizon would not be likely to substantially lessen competition.

The dismissal of the ACCC's application for special leave means that the decision in the Full Federal Court stands, and Pacific National can proceed with its acquisition of the Acacia Ridge Terminal.

Road Works Update

Smart Motorway Now Operational

The M4 Smart Motorway is now operational after a trial in which the intelligent technology provided motorists with a smoother and more reliable journey, according to Transport for NSW.

Road sensors, traffic cameras, ramp signals, and overhead gantries have been installed along the corridor to better manage traffic, improve incident response times and move more people.

Transport for NSW is now investigating the installation of the smart technology on other major corridors including the M1 from the ANZAC Bridge to the Warringah Fwy.

Environmental Approval Given for Coffs Harbour Bypass

The Coffs Harbour bypass has been approved by the Federal Government after the Federal Environment Minister, Sussan Ley, assessed and then approved the project, thus moving the project a step closer to construction.

The 14-kilometre bypass will take approximately five years to build.

The Northern Rd and Bringelly Rd Upgrade Opens to Traffic

Construction on the Northern Rd Stage 2 and the full Bringelly Rd upgrade is complete and open to traffic.

The upgrades included converting the section of The Northern Rd between Peter Brock Dr and Mersey Rd, along with 10 kms of Bringelly Rd, to a four-lane dual carriageway with the 80 kmh speed limit reinstated.

The Northern Rd Bypass of Luddenham Opens to Traffic

A 1.8km upgrade of the section of The Northern Rd between Eaton Rd and Elizabeth Dr has been completed and is open to traffic.

This upgrade includes a bypass of the Luddenham Town Centre and comprises a four-lane dual carriageway.

Traffic Changes on Princes Hwy at Nowra

Changed traffic conditions are now in place on the Princes Hwy related to the Nowra Bridge project.

All traffic between Bolong Rd and Mattes Way has shifted to the east and traffic lights have been installed.

There will be some permanent changes at the Bolong Rd and Princes Hwy intersection as part of the traffic shift, with the acceleration lane for vehicles turning right onto the Princes Hwy from Bolong Rd to be permanently removed.

This section of road will be reduced to one lane in each direction during this time and a reduced speed of 40km/h will be in place.

All work will shut down over the Christmas period from 6pm Friday 18 December until 7am Monday 4 January 2021.

Changed Traffic Conditions on the Gwydir Hwy

Changed traffic conditions are now in place for work being carried out on the Gwydir Hwy at Washpool, 15 kms east of Moree.

From 16 December until project completion in late 2021, traffic will be diverted onto a side-track for the duration of construction, and a reduced speed of 60 km/h will be in place.

Work will take place between 7am and 6pm from Monday to Saturday, with changed traffic conditions to include reduced speed limits and intermittent closures.

Other Road Works

Suburb/ Town	Road	Date/s	No of Shifts	Work Times
Moore Park	Cleveland St from South Dowling St to Anzac Pde	6/1-19/2/21		8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Yagoona	Hume Hwy and Edgar St	5/1-28/2/21		7am-6pm Mon-Fri 8am-1pm Sat

				8pm-5am Sun-Fri
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2021 Functions and Events

The ARTIO NSW secretariat is putting together a program of functions and events for the first few months of 2021, including Breakfast Briefings, an Industry Leaders Dinner and a half day conference and dinner with a safety theme.

The first event, a Breakfast Briefing to be held on 16 February at the Rooty Hill RSL Club, will include two speakers who will speak on "National Heavy Vehicle Law 101".

Why not pencil this into your diary?

More information to follow in the New Year.

Economic Update

2020-21 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook

The Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, and the Minister for Finance, the Hon Simon Birmingham, issued the 2020-21 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook on 17 December.

Key highlights:

- A more optimistic economic outlook for 2020 but lower growth forecasts for 2021. The Federal Government now forecasts real GDP to grow by 4½ per cent in 2021 following a fall of 2½ per cent in 2020. This compares with 4¼ per cent in 2021 and a fall of 3¾ per cent in 2020 at Budget time.
 - The labour market continues to strengthen alongside the recovery in economic activity, with around 85 per cent of the 1.3 million people who lost their job or were stood down on zero hours in April now back at work.
 - The unemployment rate is forecast to peak at 7½ per cent in the March quarter 2021 down from an expected peak of 8 per cent forecast in the 2020-21 Budget. The unemployment rate is now forecast to fall to 6¼ per cent in the June quarter 2022.
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Economic and Industry Indicators

Indicator/Source ¹	As at	Unit of Measure	Quantity	Annual % Variation
GDP latest quarter (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	\$m	476,043	-3.8
CPI (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	Per cent		0.7
Cash rate (RBA)	Current	Per cent	0.1	
Household savings ratio (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	Per cent	18.9	304.8
Retail turnover (ABS)	Oct 2020	\$m	29,552	7.1
Actual new capital expenditure (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	\$m	25,850	-13.8
Inventories held by private business (ABS)	Sep 2020	\$m	163,905	-4.6
Dwelling unit approvals (ABS)	Oct 2020	Number	16,584	14.3
Manufacturers Income (ABS)	Sep 2020	\$m	86,304	-1.6

¹ ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics; RBA – Reserve Bank of Australia; AIP – Australian Institute of Petroleum; FCAI – Federated Chamber of Automotive Industries

TEUs Port Botany (NSW Ports)	5 months to Nov 2020	Number	1,096,592	0.4
Employed persons (ABS)	Nov 2020	Million	12.860	-0.6
Unemployment rate (ABS)	Nov 2020	Per cent	6.8	1.7
Wage price Index (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	Per cent		
All employees				1.4
Transport, postal and warehousing				1.4
New motor vehicle sales (FCAI)	11 months to Nov 2020	Number	821,316	-16.1
Heavy commercial vehicle sales (FCAI)	11 months to Nov 2020	Number	13,812	-22.0
Light commercial vehicle sales (FCAI)	11 months to Nov 2020	Number	8,934	-6.7
AIP Terminal Gate Price-Diesel-Sydney	8 Dec 2020	Cents/litre incl. GST	108.7	-26.1

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