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The Courier

Information and Advice for NSW Transport Operators

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ATO Updates Advice on Fuel Tax Credits

The Australian Taxation Office has issued new advice on calculating fuel tax credits.

It says transport operators can use the basic method to calculate fuel tax credits for diesel used in heavy vehicles where the claim less than \$10,000 each year.

According to the ATO, the method makes it easier to work out on and off public road use. The rate for travel off public roads is higher than on public roads. This means operators will get more fuel tax credits if they calculate off public road use correctly.

It says examples of travel off public roads includes heavy vehicle use in warehouses, depots or car parks, and where idling, loading or unloading a vehicle may take place.

This method can be used for diesel acquired on or after 1 October 2020. No other method for calculating fuel used for travel on and off public roads can be used.

Further information is available from: <https://www.ato.gov.au/Business/Fuel-schemes/Fuel-tax-credits--business/Working-out-your-fuel-tax-credits/Basic-method-for-heavy-vehicles>.

User Friendly Tool Launched to Identify Psychological Health and Safety Risks

Adapted from Article "OHS Alert", 26 February 2021

Australia's "only validated psychosocial risk assessment survey" has been relaunched on a free digital platform.

People at Work is designed to help employers comply with their duty to identify, assess and control psychological health and safety risks, the chair of the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities, Martyn Campbell said in launching the platform today.

"The People at Work digital platform lays out an easy-to-follow five-step process with resources, interactive learning modules, a self-administered survey, and automated custom reports that businesses can access, all for free," Campbell, who is also SafeWork SA's executive director, said.

Mr Campbell said previously the tool was a paper-based survey with time-consuming manual data-entry requirements.

"Industry has been crying out for an easy-to-use psychosocial risk assessment tool and People at Work is just that.

People at Work is free for Australian businesses and workplaces to help them identify and manage work-related psychosocial hazards and factors.

People at Work does not need an expert to interpret the psychosocial risk assessment results.

The digital platform enables employers to self-administer the People at Work survey, add customised demographics like workgroups and roles, and receive automated reports identifying high-risk areas with recommended control measures, benchmarking and guidance.

The initiative was led and managed by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland and funded by all state and territory WHS agencies.

Further information is available at: www.peopleatwork.gov.au.

NHVR Makes Minor Changes to Heavy Vehicle Standards

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator has begun extensive testing on a range of tyres used on Performance Based Standards combinations following recommendations by road safety expert Dr John de Pont in his "Review of Tyre Management Practices in the Australian PBS System".

NHVR Chief Engineer Les Brusza said the NHVR was working with the Australian Road Research Board to undertake tyre testing needed to progress Dr de Pont's findings.

Mr Brusza said that in addition to the safety assessment projects being undertaken to investigate potential impacts of the generic tyre approach for PBS assessments, the NHVR has engaged ARRB to conduct tyre testing to consider the effects of varying test conditions on tyre performance.

"The testing will examine the effect of variations in tread depth, vertical loads, different inflation pressures, road surface characteristics and the performance characteristics of different tyres.

"The results will also be used to determine how the performance of heavy vehicle tyres in the Australian market differ from the Michelin XZA tyre used to develop the PBS Standards.

"With almost one in five new heavy vehicles approved under the PBS scheme, we want to take a best-practice approach to the management of tyres on the PBS fleet.

"The testing is another step towards a consistent approach among manufacturers and will give heavy vehicle manufacturers certainty about how we measure tyre performance.

Dr de Pont's Review of Tyre Management Practice in the Australian PBS System discussion paper is available at: <https://www.nhvr.gov.au/files/201903-1018-review-of-tyre-management-practice-in-pbs-discussion-paper.pdf>.

Personal Injury Commission Assumes Responsibility for Workers Compensation and CTP Disputes Claims

The State Insurance Regulatory Agency has advised that from 1 March disputes regarding workers compensation and CTP insurance claims will be managed by the Personal Injury Commission, a single tribunal that replaces both the Workers Compensation Commission and SIRA's Dispute Resolution Services.

Contact details from 1 March 2021 will be:
Website: www.pi.nsw.gov.au (going live on 1 March)
Telephone: 1800 742 679
Email Address: help@pi.nsw.gov.au

Independent Review Office Assumes Responsibility for CTP Claims Complaints

The State Insurance Regulatory Agency has advised that from 1 March the Independent Review Office will receive complaints about CTP insurers in the claims process, from both injured road users who are claimants and their representatives. The IRO (previously known as the Workers Compensation Independent Review Office or WIRO) will continue to manage complaints from injured workers about workers compensation insurers.

SIRA will continue to undertake regulatory investigation and enforcement action in relation to complaints in both schemes.

Contact details effective from 1 March 2021 will be:
Website: www.iro.nsw.gov.au (going live on 1 March)
Telephone: 13 94 76
Email Address: contact@iro.nsw.gov.au

SA Transport Operator Charged Over Engine Remapping

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator has charged a SA company with a primary duty offence for allegedly remapping the engines of heavy vehicles.

The charges stem from a SA Police operation in June 2020.

The NHVR says it will argue that the checks conducted during the operation indicate the vehicle was not using Adblue, suggesting its emissions control system had been tampered with.

It says examinations were conducted on other heavy vehicles registered to the company which form the basis of additional charges.

It is alleged that the operator of the vehicles disabled the emission controls on the heavy vehicles.

NHVR Executive Director of Statutory Compliance Ray Hassall said that emissions tampering caused significant health and environmental risks.

"Engine remapping is inconsistent with the primary duty to ensure safety under the HVNL, as the resultant increased emissions have the potential to harm the health of the driver and other members of the community," Mr Hassall said.

Mr Hassall said truck drivers are constantly exposed to high levels of diesel emissions and suffer higher rates of diesel-related illnesses, including cancer, heart disease and asthma.

He said that operating in a compliant way levels the playing field and supports the health and safety of drivers in their workplace.

The company has been charged under section 26H (category 3) offence for breaching its primary duty to eliminate or minimise the risk of harm to the environment.

The company has also been charged with four offences of tampering with emissions controls systems and four offences of operating a heavy vehicle other than in accordance with the manufacturer's design.

The matter is first before the Berri Magistrates' Court on 24 March 2021.

Comment Sought on Draft National Road Safety Strategy

The draft National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30 is now available for public consultation.

The draft strategy sets the direction of Australia's road safety objectives, key priorities for action and road trauma reduction targets for the decade to 2030 to set us on the path to achieve Vision Zero by 2050 – meaning zero deaths and serious injuries from road crashes.

To view the draft strategy or make a submission, please visit www.officeofroadsafety.gov.au/nrss.

Infrastructure Australia Releases 2021 Priorities

Infrastructure Australia has released its 2021 infrastructure priorities.

Priorities are categorised as High Priority Projects, Priority Projects, High Priority Initiatives and Priority Initiatives.

There are six High Priority Projects, the highest category in terms of priority, three of which are in NSW, namely:

- M12 motorway linking the M7 motorway with the A9 (The Northern Road) on the north side of the proposed Western Sydney Airport.
- Sydney metro rail line – Chatswood to Bankstown.
- Western Sydney airport.

There are 17 priority projects, including the Melbourne-Brisbane inland rail, Parkes bypass, Port Botany rail duplication and Cabramatta bypass loop, Prospect Hwy upgrade, increased Sydney rail network capacity and, in Canberra, upgrade of the Commonwealth Ave bridge.

Full details are available at: www.infrastructure.gov.au.

Road Works Update

Bridge Works, Barham Koondrook Bridge

Work has commenced to restore the heritage listed Barham Koondrook Bridge which spans the Murray River.

Work will take place between 7am and 6pm weekdays and is expected to be completed in mid-May, weather permitting.

During the work, the bridge will remain open with a reduced speed limit of 20 km/h, which may result in occasional delays of up to 20 minutes.

Road Works, Anzac Pde Southbound Near Cleveland St from 28 February

Road works will take place southbound on Anzac Pde near the Cleveland St intersection each night from 10pm to 5am between Sunday, 28 February and Thursday, 4 March.

Road Works, Princes Hwy, Turlinjah to Bodalla from 25 February

Road works have commenced on the Princes Highway between Turlinjah and Bumbo Rd, Bodalla.

Work will take about seven months to complete.

Work will be carried out on weekdays from 7am to 6pm and on Saturdays from 8am to 1pm, weather permitting.

Intermittent lane closures, traffic control and a reduced speed limit of 40 km/h will be in place for the safety of workers and road users.

Road Works, New England Hwy Near Glen Innes

Motorists on the New England Hwy have commenced between Ryanda Creek Rd and Stoke Farm Rd, south of Glen Innes.

The project will be carried out from 7am to 6pm on weekdays and 7am to 2pm on Saturdays, and is expected to be complete by May, weather permitting.

Other Road Works

Suburb/ Town	Road	Date/s	No of Shifts	Work Times
Bangor	Bangor By-pass eastbound east of Menai Rd on-ramp	28/2-22/4/21	27 day shifts possible	8pm-5am Sun-Fri 7am-6pm Mon-Fri 8am-1pm Sat

2021 Functions and Events

Women in Transport Breakfast, Rooty Hill, 25 March, 2021, 7.30am-9am

ARTIO NSW is pleased to invite you and your colleagues to its Annual Women in Transport Breakfast to be held on 25 March, with guest speaker, Jacqueline Brotherton, Chair, Transport Women Australia Limited.

Jacqueline will speak on Women in Transport – Breaking the Operational Glass Ceiling.

Jacqueline will use her personal experience and industry knowledge to outline how women can break into operational roles in road transport and in the process explain how this can facilitate both their career development while diversifying the collective experience of women in both a company and the industry.

There will also be a short presentation from our event sponsor, TWUSUPER.

It is also proposed to run question and answer sessions followed by networking opportunity.

Please contact the ARTIO NSW secretariat, email, hughmc@artionsw.com.au, or telephone 0412 880861, if you require further information or wish to register.

Economic Update

Signs of Growth in Private Sector Wage Rates

The latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics point to an underlying rebound in private sector wages growth in Australia.

According to the ABS, private sector wages grew by 0.7 per cent in the three months ending 31 December and by 1.4 per cent in the 12 months ending 31 December.

While annualised wages growth to the end of December did not change from the year ending 30 September and remains at its lowest annual growth rate in well over 20 years, the relatively strong December suggests annualised wage increases may rebound, even modestly.

Unlike previous December quarters, increases in award wages, including in the main transport awards, took place for many workers during the December quarter but all that does is shift that component of wage increases from the September to December quarters.

Wages in the transport, postal and warehousing sector rose by 0.4 per cent over the December quarter and by 1.5 per cent in the year ending 31 December.

New Capital Expenditure Turns Upward in December 2020 Quarter

After several years of a generally downward trend in the value of new capital expenditure, there was a three per cent uptick in the December 2020 quarter, compared to the September 2020 quarter, on a seasonally adjusted basis.

However, total new capital expenditure remains at levels 20 per cent below those evident five years ago and 7.5 per cent in the December 2019 quarter.

The uptick was not all about mining either with new capital sector in the mining sector falling by 1.4 per cent and increasing by 4.9 per cent on the non-mining sector, compared to the September 2020 quarter, and is roughly in line with investment levels five years ago.

Expenditure on equipment and machinery rose 5.7 per cent in the December 2020 quarter, compared to the September 2020 quarter and is higher than investment levels five years ago.

On the other hand, while investment in buildings and structures rose 0.7 per cent in the December 2020 quarter, compared to the September 2020 quarter, it is still only at around 60 per cent of the expenditure level evident five years ago.

Economic and Industry Indicators

Indicator/Source¹	As at	Unit of Measure	Quantity	Annual % Variation
GDP latest quarter (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	\$m	476,043	-3.8
CPI (ABS)	Dec Qtr 2020	Per cent		1.4
Cash rate (RBA)	Current	Per cent	0.1	
Household savings ratio (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	Per cent	18.9	304.8
Retail turnover (ABS)	Dec 2020	\$m	30,369	9.6
Actual new capital expenditure (ABS)	Dec Qtr 2020	\$m	29,385	-7.5
Inventories held by private business (ABS)	Dec 2020	\$m	164,294	-4.6
Dwelling unit approvals (ABS)	Dec 2020	Number	19,537	22.8
Manufacturers Income (ABS)	Dec Qtr 2020	\$m	87,865	-0.8
TEUs Port Botany (NSW Ports)	7 months to Jan 2021	Number	1,586,129	4.0
Employed persons (ABS)	Jan 2021	Million	12.940	-0.3
Unemployment rate (ABS)	Jan 2021	Per cent	6.4	1.1
Wage price Index (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	Per cent		
All employees				1.4
Transport, postal and warehousing				1.4
New motor vehicle sales (FCAI)	1 month to Jan 2021	Number	79,666	11.1

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

Heavy commercial vehicle sales (FCAI)	1 month to Jan 2021	Number	2,047	13.2
Light commercial vehicle sales (FCAI)	1 month to Jan 2021	Number	17,485	24.6
AIP Terminal Gate Price-Diesel-Sydney	1 Mar 2021	Cents/litre incl. GST	120.0	-5.3

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