



New South Wales Branch
PO Box 277
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220
Tel: 0412 880861
Email: hughmc@artionsw.com.au
ABN: 93149961882

The Courier

Information and Advice for NSW Transport Operators

Newsletter Vol. 7, No 6, 29 March, 2021

Contents

1. NSW Government to Fast Track Improved Heavy Vehicle Access
2. Road Closures to Continue, Road Maintenance to Ramp Up
3. Make Women Feel Safe at Work Says TWAL Chair
4. Consignor Charged with Safety Breaches Under NHVL
5. State Insurance Regulator Launches Return to Work E-Newsletter
6. ATO Provides Advice on JobMaker Hiring Credit Scheme
7. NHVR Seeks Comment on Draft Heavy Vehicle Safety Strategy
8. NHVR Enters Partnership with Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds
9. OzHelp to Roll Out Health and Well Being Program for Truck Drivers
10. icare Proposes 2.9 Per Cent Premium Increase
11. Road Works Update
12. Economic Update
13. Economic and Industry Indicators

NSW Government to Fast Track Improved Heavy Vehicle Access

Adapted from joint media release, John Barilaro, Deputy Premier and Minister for Disaster Recovery and Paul Toole, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, 29 March 2021

The NSW Government has fast tracked increased access for higher productivity vehicles on the road network to ensure transport operators can keep essential supplies moving into flood-impacted areas in the regions.

Deputy Premier and Minister responsible for Disaster Recovery John Barilaro said the priority right now is to ensure roads are accessible, places are safe for people to return, and businesses can continue to operate.

“The 2019/20 bushfires and the clean-up and recovery efforts that followed taught us a great deal, and having worked on bushfire recovery for the past 15 months, I am taking that experience and those lessons with me to steer recovery following these extreme floods,” Mr Barilaro said.

“The flooding has impacted a number of our rail lines and we are working to get them back up and running as soon as possible. In the interim, we are ensuring we can move essential goods by road in safe modern transport vehicles.”

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole said flooding had significantly impacted the movement of freight across the State, preventing operations along a number of rail lines and disrupting access through multiple north-south road corridors.

“Currently, many roads are only available to 26 metre B-Double heavy vehicles but under the changes, we are opening up a new access network to Higher Productivity Vehicles that meet Performance Based Standard level 2B on the State managed road network,” Mr Toole said.

“This means safer, modern vehicles of up to 30 metres long fitted with telematics that can carry up to 33 per cent more than a 26 metre B Double, meaning we can get more essential supplies in faster.”

A map of the roads open to Performance Based Standard Tier 1 level 2B vehicles is available at <https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/business-industry/heavy-vehicles/maps/restricted-access-vehicles-map/index.html>.

Access will still be under a permit for some time, however a permit to access a network rather than specific routes can be provided to road operators. Operators can apply for an access permit via the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator access portal, <https://www.nhvr.gov.au/about-us/nhvr-portal>.

In another significant flood response, conditional access on the M1 motorway will be considered for modular B Triple road trains up to 35 meters long, fitted with telematics and advanced safety technologies to move more essential goods along the north south route, which is still heavily affected by the recent rains.

For more information go to on the PBS 2B network visit www.nswroads.work/ravmap.

Road Closures to Continue, Road Maintenance to Ramp Up

Road closures are likely to remain in place across many areas of NSW and due to flooding and, in some instances, landslides.

Rail lines are also closed in some places.

Rivers can be expected to take some time to recede, especially west of the Great Dividing Range.

Maintenance crews will be out in force cleaning up debris for some time.

Damage to roads and other structures is widespread. Maintenance crews will also be conducting repairs.

Transport for NSW advises transport operators to check Live Traffic, <https://www.livetraffic.com>, before commencing any journey.

Stay safe.

Make Women Feel Safe at Work says TWAL Chair

Transport Women Australia Chair, Jacqueline Brotherton, said the most important thing transport, terminal and warehouse operators, consignors and consignees can do support women undertaking operational roles in the industry is to create a safe working environment.

Ms Brotherton who was guest speaker at the ARTIO NSW Women in Transport Breakfast Briefing on 25 March, said a safe working environment is an environment with good lighting and locks on doors of both toilets and showers.

Consignor Charged with Safety Breaches Under HVNL

Adapted from Article “OHS Alert”, 22 March 2021

The consignor of 26 tonnes of imported plywood has been charged with contravening the chain-of-responsibility provisions of the Heavy Vehicle National Law, after a truck carrying the products in a container rolled over onto a pedestrian island in Dandenong.

The company faces a maximum penalty of a least \$2 million, if found guilty, with the NHVR accusing it of multiple category 2 and category-3 breaches of its primary safety duty as a consignor.

It is the first consignor to be prosecuted by the NHVR since the HVNL was amended in 2018 to impose proactive safety duties on all supply chain parties.

NHVR alleges that at the time of the November 2019 crash, in which no one was injured, the company failed to: comply with loading and restraint requirements; advise its overseas supplier of Australian safety regulations; ensure a restraint system was in place inside the container; or advise the driver and operator how the load was packed.

Significantly, the consignor was allegedly guilty of the same failings in relation to 189 containers transported since June 2017.

The company exposed drivers, unloaders and members of the public to the risk of death or serious injury, the NHVR alleges.

"[The crash] was a serious incident that the NHVR will allege was caused by multiple breaches of safety laws," NHVR statutory compliance executive director Ray Hassall said.

State Insurance Regulator Launches Return to Work E-Newsletter

The State Insurance Regulatory Agency is providing return to work coordinators with practical resources about recovery at work in its new monthly e-newsletter, *Recovery at work insider*.

SIRA says that each issue will provide bite size tips on the most up-to-date recovery at work evidence.

It says the e-newsletter will provide practical information about what works as well as useful links to recovery at work resources.

Those responsible for managing an injured person's recovery at work can subscribe to the newsletter at: <https://comms.sira.nsw.gov.au/recovery-at-work-insider>.

ATO Provides Advice on JobMaker Hiring Credit Scheme

Advice, Australian Taxation Office

The JobMaker Hiring Credit scheme is an incentive for businesses to employ additional young job seekers aged 16–35 years.

Eligible employers can access the JobMaker Hiring Credit for each eligible additional employee they hire between 7 October 2020 and 6 October 2021.

Eligible employers:

- Will be able to register with the ATO from 6 December 2020. To register, please go to <https://www.ato.gov.au/general/JobMaker-Hiring-Credit/Register-for-JobMaker-Hiring-Credit>.
- Can claim payments from the ATO in arrears from 1 February 2021. Further information is available at: <https://www.ato.gov.au/general/JobMaker-Hiring-Credit/JobMaker-Hiring-Credit-key-dates>.
- Can claim payments for eligible additional employees for up to 12 months from their employment start date.
- Cannot claim JobKeeper and the JobMaker Hiring Credit at the same time.

Employers unable to claim the JobMaker Hiring Credit may be able to claim other support payments from the Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment. Further information is available at: www.dese.gov.au.

NHVR Seeks Comment on Draft Heavy Vehicle Safety Strategy

The NHVR is seeking feedback on the draft *Heavy Vehicle Safety Strategy 2021-2025*, which sets out the NHVR's strategic ambitions to improve heavy vehicle safety outcomes and contribute to a reduction in the number of crashes, fatalities and serious injuries involving heavy vehicles.

NHVR Safety Director Greg Fill said the strategy, which was developed to align with the Federal Government's draft *National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030*, is open for feedback until 30 April 2021.

"The Safety Strategy will be supported by an annual Action Plan, outlining the activities, responsibilities and timeframes for delivery that the NHVR will undertake over the next 5 years," Mr Fill said.

"This an opportunity to have input into the NHVR's strategic approach to partnerships, creating positive change in individual behaviours and industry culture, and to drive the uptake of a modern, safer heavy vehicle fleet that reduces the likelihood and impact of crashes."

According to data released by BITRE, the yearly number of road deaths involving a heavy vehicle has been trending downwards, with a 2.5 per cent reduction over the last decade.

"Any fatality on our roads is one too many so we want to see that number continue to reduce over the next decade," Mr Fill said.

To view the strategy and make a submission go to www.nhvr.gov.au/hvss.

NHVR Enters Partnership with Healthy Heads in Truck and Sheds

Adapted from joint media release, Sal Petrocitto, Chief Executive Officer, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and Naomi Frauenfelder, Chief Executive Officer, Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds, 12 March 2021

The NHVR has entered into a new partnership with the Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds to improve psychological safety and physical health across the heavy vehicle and logistics industries.

NHVR CEO Sal Petrocitto said the partnership with HHTS showed the importance the NHVR placed on mental and physical health when it comes to heavy vehicle safety and ensuring drivers and logistics workers have access to the best possible information, resources and support.

"The HHTS project is one of the first mental health initiatives that is directly co-driven with industry, customers and others across the complete supply chain at all levels," Mr Petrocitto said.

"Today we've signed off on a set of Guiding Principles which outline a clear and mutual commitment to the heavy vehicle transport and logistics industries to do our part to improve mental health and physical wellbeing."

HHTS CEO Naomi Frauenfelder said that support from road transport operators and customers was vital to tackling issues relating to driver psychological safety and physical health.

"HHTS is working to build a healthier and more thriving industry, by promoting prevention and understanding of mental health issues in truck drivers and logistics workers," Ms Frauenfelder said.

"This includes equipping them with the skills and confidence to support their colleagues through life's ups and downs, as well as monitoring their own mental health and seeking help when needed.

For more information visit www.healthyheads.org.au.

OzHelp to Roll Out Health and Well Being Program for Truck Drivers

Adapted from joint media release, Darren Black, CEO, OzHelp and Sal Petrocitto, CEO, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, 17 March 2021

The OzHelp Foundation, in collaboration with truck drivers, their families, and researchers, have developed a health and wellbeing program to support truck drivers, according to CEO, Darren Black.

Mr Black said the program, Health in Gear, provides online resources, roadside health checks, and a support line for owner drivers and their immediate family members.

Mr Black said Health in Gear is about assisting truck drivers to be as well as they can be, taking into account the unique challenges they face each day.

“Our research uncovered systemic issues across the industry and by working with driver focus groups we’ve developed tips and tools to support drivers in improving and maintaining their health and wellbeing, even during the toughest of times,” Mr Black said.

He said a key element to the program is the Truckie Tune Up, a mobile health check, with a pilot starting at select sites across ACT and NSW in April.

Mr Black said these Tune Ups provide drivers with an opportunity give their own health the same attention they would give their vehicles, have a chat and connect with someone who understands the industry.

Follow-ups can be arranged, and ongoing support is available through our OzHelp’s 1800 IN GEAR support line.

The program is funded through the NHVR’s Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative, funded by the Australian Government.

The University of Wollongong has collaborated with OzHelp to develop and evaluate the program.

NHVR CEO Sal Petrocitto said the Health in Gear program was an important initiative to ensure owner drivers and their families had access to the best possible information, resources and support while on the road.

“We know that healthy drivers are safer drivers, and that all starts with good mental health and wellbeing,” Mr Petrocitto said.

Further information is available at: www.healthingear.com.au, or telephone 1800 IN GEAR.

icare Proposes 2.9 Per Cent Premium Increase

icare has proposed an increase in the premium rate from 1.4% of wages to 1.44% of wages for the 2021-22 policy year. This results in an average 2.9% increase across the scheme.

The proposal has been put to the State Insurance Regulatory Authority as part of icare’s annual review of the premium model.

Road Works Update

New Contractor to Complete Upgrades on the Princes Hwy at Kirrawee

A new contractor has been appointed to complete the Acacia Rd, Oak Rd, Kingsway and President Ave upgrades along the Princes Highway at Kirrawee.

The contractor commenced work in March, with the priority to fast-track work that resolves issues directly impacting residents and businesses along the corridor.

Transport for NSW said the objective was for work to be completed by the end of 2021.

The contractors will be on site from 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm Saturdays, weather permitting.

Barton Hwy Duplication

Work is underway to build two new lanes northbound on the Barton Hwy from south of the NSW-ACT border to the intersection of Rolfe Rd.

\$50m has been allocated by both the Australian and NSW Governments to the first stage of the duplication which is expected to be completed in 2023.

New Batemans Bay Bridge Open

Two lanes of the new Batemans Bay bridge are now open.

The opening of the new bridge also signals the start of the removal of the existing bridge, which is expected to be completed by the end of the year, at which time it is expected the new bridge will open to four lanes of traffic.

Road Works, Newell Hwy

Work to construct an overtaking lane along a one km section of the Newell Hwy at Dusty's Creek, near Gilgandra, commenced on 23 March and is expected to take three months to complete, weather permitting.

Further work will start at Redbank, near Coonabarrabran, in April on a five km section of the Newell Hwy.

Road Works, Olympic Hwy, Cowra to Albury

Road work will commence at several locations on the Olympic Hwy between Cowra and Albury in April.

The works are expected to take two months to complete.

Other Road Works

Suburb/ Town	Road	Date/s	No of Shifts	Work Times
Bexley	Stoney Creek Rd from Preddy's Rd to Forest Rd	28/3-20/5/21	10	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Chipping Norton	Newbridge Rd Bridge	16/3-30/4/21		7am-6pm Mon-Fri 8am-1pm Sat
Enmore	Enmore Rd from Stanmore Rd to Phillip St	29/3-10/5/21	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Mascot-St Peters	Ricketty St bridge	April		7am-6pm Mon-Fri 8am-1pm Sat 6pm-7am Sun-Fri
Padstow	Fairford Rd from Bryant St to Stuart St	30/3-4/5/21	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Punchbowl	Punchbowl Rd east of Rossmore Ave	24/3-16/4/21		8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Randwick	Frenchman's Rd near Clovelly Rd	21/3-9/4/21		8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Ultimo	Harris St from Western Distributor overpass to William Henry St	21/3-23/4/21	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri

Economic Update

Employment Rebounds but Spare Capacity Remains

The latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that employment levels in Australia in February have rebounded to levels comparable with those which prevailed a year earlier, just before governments took steps to shut down large sectors of the economy as part of their response to COVID-19 outbreaks.

The number of people in work stood at just under 13.007 million in February 2021, only 8,000 fewer than in February 2020.

However, there were 805,000 unemployed people or 5.8 per cent of the workforce.

By comparison, in February 2020, there were 696,000 unemployed people and the unemployment rate was 5 per cent.

Given the end of JobKeeper, unemployment levels are expected to jump sharply in the short term as business which have relied on JobKeeper to employ people start laying off staff. Some of those businesses may can be expected to close down.

Federal Treasury Secretary, Stephen Kennedy, expects another 150,000 people to be unemployed as a result of the end of JobKeeper.

This means the level of spare capacity in the labour market will grow.

Spare capacity in Australia is thought to exist whenever unemployment is above about 4 per cent.

The Governor of the Reserve Bank, Philip Lowe, has said on a number of occasions that removing spare capacity is a precondition to raising official interest rates.

This is because the Reserve Bank is looking for signs that wage rates will increase and, in turn, will underpin an increase in the rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

Dr Lowe has also said that the current Reserve Bank cash rate of 0.10 per cent will stay in place till 2023, and, possibly, to 2024.

That suggests the Reserve Bank thinks it will be some time before spare capacity in the labour market is achieved.

Economic and Industry Indicators

Indicator/Source ¹	As at	Unit of Measure	Quantity	Annual % Variation
GDP latest quarter (ABS)	Dec Qtr 2020	\$m	491,525	-1.1
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	12.0	226.4
Retail turnover (ABS)	Jan 2021	\$m	30,512	10.1
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)	Jan 2021	Number	15,926	19.0
Manufacturers Income (ABS)	Dec Qtr 2020	\$m	87,865	-0.8
TEUs Port Botany (NSW Ports)	7 months to Jan 2021	Number	1,809,899	6.3
Employed persons (ABS)	Feb 2021	Million	13.007	0.0
Unemployment rate (ABS)	Feb 2021	Per cent	5.8	0.8
Wage price Index (ABS)	Dec Qtr 2020	Per cent		
All employees				1.4
Transport, postal and warehousing				1.5
New motor vehicle sales (FCAI)	2 months to Feb 2021	Number	163,343	7.9
Heavy commercial vehicle sales (FCAI)	2 months to Feb 2021	Number	4,853	13.6
Light commercial vehicle sales (FCAI)	2 months to Feb 2021	Number	36,811	22.8

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

AIP Terminal Gate Price-Diesel-Sydney	29 Mar 2021	Cents/litre incl. GST	122.5	-15.2
---------------------------------------	-------------	--------------------------	-------	-------

DISCLAIMER: This document is an information source only. Despite our best efforts, ARTIO NSW makes no statements, representations or warranties about the accuracy or completeness of the information and disclaims responsibility for all liability for all loss or damage you might incur as a result of the information being inaccurate or incomplete in any way, and for any reason. The information contained in this document is not intended to be nor should it be relied upon as a substitute for legal or other professional advice.
