

Tuesday, 22 June 2021

BUSH TO BENEFIT FROM UNPRECEDENTED TRANSPORT AND ROADS INVESTMENT IN NSW BUDGET

Regional NSW will benefit from record investment in the 2021-2022 Budget to deliver a safer, stronger road and transport network, to better connect regional customers with affordable travel, drive freight productivity on road and rail and create thousands of local jobs.

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole said the NSW Government would invest more than \$9 billion in regional transport and roads in 2021-22 alone, as part of a record spend on transport infrastructure and services in the bush.

“At a time when regional communities are still recovering from the impacts of COVID and natural disasters, the NSW Government is investing more money than ever before to help turbocharge jobs in the bush and unlock new opportunities,” Mr Toole said.

“The events of the last year have prompted more and more people to relocate to and travel to the regions and our investment in roads and transport infrastructure will ensure we are meeting the needs of regional communities now and for the future.

“Right across the state, the NSW Government is investing in transformative projects through this Budget – from construction kicking off on the Parkes Bypass to the completion of the Albion Park Rail Bypass and Berry to Bomaderry upgrade on the Princes Highway and continued sealing of the Cobb and Silver City Highway in the Far West.

“Nearly every major highway is seeing investment that will deliver safer journeys and improved productivity - from the \$2 billion being invested in the Great Western Highway to the \$1.2 billion we are investing over the next four years in the Coffs Harbour Bypass on the Pacific Highway.

“We’re also tackling the congestion challenges in fast growing areas like the Hunter and Central Coast, with \$438 million to progress the Singleton and Muswellbrook Bypasses which will see works underway in 2022, \$10.9 million to deliver Stage 1 of the Hillsborough Road upgrade at Crockett Street, and \$54.5 million for Manns Road intersection upgrades at Narara Creek and Stockyard Place.”

Mr Toole said the NSW Government was committed to helping regional councils build a stronger local road network, with \$240 million for Fixing Local Roads in 2021-22 to help councils repair, maintain and seal priority roads in their communities and \$297.2 million for Fixing Country Bridges which is helping councils replace hundreds of ageing timber bridges.

“The NSW Government has created a new fund to support the upgrade of regional roads transferred to the State as part of the NSW Government’s regional road

classification review, with \$250 million committed over the next three years,” Mr Toole said.

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said the NSW Government continues to ease cost of living pressures for seniors in regional areas, with access to transport and ease of movement a top priority for regional seniors in this year’s Budget.

“We know the cost of living is a big issue facing seniors and households, which is why the Regional Seniors Travel Card is being offered to even more people,” Mr Perrottet said.

“Increased funding will allow us to extend the card from 2022 to more seniors in the regions, including those eligible for the Age Pension and receiving either a Disability Support Pension or a Carer Payment from Services Australia.”

“Along with more services we are also helping to ease the burden of travel costs by investing \$246.3 million to extend the Regional Seniors Travel Card for a further two years, providing more than 300,000 eligible regional seniors with a \$250 prepaid Visa card.”

Some of the highlights from the budget include:

- **\$131.5 million (\$2 billion over four years)** to progress the duplication of 34 kilometres of the Great Western Highway Upgrade from Katoomba to Lithgow, including investigation of an 11 kilometre road tunnel from Blackheath to Little Hartley
- **\$311.3 million (\$1.8 billion over four years)** for the continued transformation of the Princes Highway including the new Nowra Bridge, the Albion Park Rail Bypass and the Berry to Bomaderry Upgrade, as well as planning for further upgrades between Nowra and the Victorian border including the Jervis Bay Road intersection, Milton-Ulladulla Bypass and Moruya Bypass
- **\$235.6 million (\$907.8 million over four years)** for NSW and Commonwealth Government funded works to upgrade the Newell Highway, including continued delivery of 40 new overtaking lanes, flood-proofing between West Wyalong and Forbes, the new Dubbo Bridge and commencing construction on the Parkes Bypass
- **\$320 million (\$1.3 billion over four years)** to deliver a modern new Regional Rail Fleet to replace the ageing XPT, XPLOER and Endeavour trains and construct a purpose-built maintenance facility at Dubbo
- **\$193 million (1.4 billion over four years)** to continue the Pacific Highway Upgrade program, including commencing construction on the Coffs Harbour Bypass
- **\$70.3 million (\$534.8 million over four years)** for upgrades to the New England Highway, including commencing construction between Belford and the Golden Highway and progressing the Singleton and Muswellbrook bypasses where works are on track to start in 2022

- **\$52 million (\$146.5 million over four years)** towards Stage 1 of the Barton Highway duplication
- **\$2.9 million (\$10.9 million over four years)** to deliver the \$35 million Stage 1 of the Hillsborough Road Upgrade, which includes the upgrade of the Crockett Street intersection.
- **\$27.4 million** towards completion of the sealing of the Silver City and Cobb Highways in the Far West to open up the region for tourism and freight operators
- **\$63.8 million (\$103.8 million over four years)** for the Fixing Country Rail program which is driving improved capacity, efficiency and reliability of the regional rail network
- **\$28.1 million (\$348.9 million over four years)** to progress the M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace, one of the Hunter's biggest road infrastructure projects
- **\$117.2 million in recurrent expenses (\$344.8 million over four years)** for the Regional Seniors Travel Card scheme, providing \$250 per year towards fuel, taxi travel or NSW TrainLink tickets for eligible seniors living in regional New South Wales. This includes an additional \$246.3 million to extend the program for a further two years
- **\$25 million (\$124.8 million over four years)** for new passing loops to improve the capacity and efficiency of the Main West Rail Line for passenger and freight rail.

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