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BUDGET FOCUSES ON FREIGHT

Improving freight outcomes remains a strong focus in the 2016-17 NSW Budget, with a record injection of $450 million this financial year to deliver critical road and rail freight projects right across the State.

Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight Duncan Gay said key freight investments include a strong focus on upgrading rail connections to ports and removing local freight pinch points on regional roads and bridges.

“Improved freight efficiency is critical to the economy and our local communities – by reducing freight costs we cut prices on supermarket shelves,” Mr Gay said.

“The NSW Government is delivering ‘one-of-a-kind’ freight programs like Fixing Country Roads and Fixing Country Rail to ensure funding is targeted where it’s needed most, particularly on council owned infrastructure.

“We are also committed to reducing the number of truck trips required on busy urban roads by upgrading rail infrastructure to carry heavier and longer trains, reduce train hold ups and better separate passenger and freight rail.”

Budget highlights include:

- $208 million to continue the upgrade and maintenance of grain lines in country NSW including replacing worn timber sleepers with modern life-long steel sleepers, resurfacing track and replacement of bridges and culverts
- $111 million to continue improving freight productivity and safety, including $64 million towards the Bridges for the Bush program to replace or upgrade ageing infrastructure including timber truss bridges, and $14 million for the Golden Highway
- $46 million for upgrades on the Newell Highway, including realignment works at Grong Grong and Trewilga, building and planning for new overtaking lanes, heavy duty pavement upgrades, planning for a bypass of Parkes, and planning for improvements at Coonabarabran and Dubbo
- $32.5 million to continue planning major rail projects across NSW including the Sydney Metropolitan Freight Network, Main West, Main South, Lower Hunter Freight Corridor, Northern Sydney Freight Corridor and Southern Sydney Freight Line
- $14 million to progress upgrading Gocup Road to support increasing numbers of heavy vehicles carrying timber and general cargo to and from the forest products mills in the Tumut Valley
- $12 million to continue the upgrade and sealing of the Cobb and Silver City highways
- $10.5 million (part of a $15 million pilot) for Fixing Country Rail, kick starting the full $400 million program to upgrade country rail including helping to open unused rail lines
- $6.3 million of upgrades on the Oxley Highway, including completing planning and commencing construction of a second road over rail bridge in Gunnedah
- $5 million to continue rolling out the Freight Noise Action Plan to reduce rail freight noise and help improve amenity for residents living near major rail corridors
- $5 million to continue improving operations at Port Botany to reduce truck turn-around times and increase the number of containers on each train.

MEDIA: Nina Stevens | Minister Gay | 0438 401 475