Joint Media Statement

22 July 2016

Upgraded section of Pacific Highway between Nambucca Heads and Urunga opens to traffic

The first motorists will begin travelling along the upgraded 22 kilometre section of the Pacific Highway between Nambucca Heads to Urunga today with the $780 million project opening to traffic.

The Australian and NSW governments each contributed $390 million towards the project.

Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Darren Chester said the major upgrade would allow road users to bypass the community of Urunga, providing an ongoing safety benefit by removing heavy vehicles from local roads.

“The new highway is a four-lane divided road with two new interchanges at Nambucca Heads and Ballards Road at Valla. It also includes an upgrade to the existing Waterfall Way interchange at Raleigh,” Mr Chester.

New South Wales Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight Duncan Gay said the upgrade would deliver significant safety and travel time improvements for the more than 14,000 motorists who travel along this stretch of the Pacific Highway daily.

“This section of the Pacific Highway is opening today a month early and even more importantly on budget. We have now upgraded about 70 per cent of the highway and since work begun the number of fatalities along the highway has halved,” Mr Gay said.

“Motorists travelling the full length of the Pacific Highway are already saving more than an hour and half in travel time. Since December last year, 65 kilometres of new four-lane divided road has opened to traffic between Hexham and the Queensland border.”

Federal Member for Cowper Luke Hartsuyker said ongoing progress along the Pacific Highway continued to create local jobs and investment along the length and breadth of the Cowper electorate, as well as improving driver safety.

“The Nambucca Heads to Urunga upgrade includes a wide median to reduce the risk of head-on collisions,” he said.
“Thirty-seven bridges have been constructed along the alignment to cross local roads, creeks and drains, improving the flood immunity of the road to minimise impacts on motorists during wet weather.

“This infrastructure investment is creating local jobs for local people and is bringing flow-on benefits for businesses in the local community.”

NSW Member for Oxley Melinda Pavey said the community had fought hard to secure the road upgrades.

“It’s great news to be able to deliver and open this section of highway today as I know local communities, have been waiting for this moment for years,” Mrs Pavey said.

“The new highway will also enhance local tourism and business opportunities through reduced travel times, and we have already seen this developing right along the North Coast.

“This is an opportunity for our local communities to thrive and grow as we have seen each time a new section of the Pacific Highway opens.”

Some finishing works will now be undertaken on the project, with full completion expected in around three months’ time. Further information can be found on the Roads and Maritime Services website at www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects.

By December 2017, an additional 83 kilometres of four-lane divided road between will progressively open to traffic, weather permitting.

With major work progressing on the other sections between Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour, and further up the coast on the Woolgoolga to Ballina section, motorists can expect to save up to two and half hours by 2020 when driving between Sydney and Brisbane.

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