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REGIONAL NSW TO RECEIVE $4 BILLION OF $5.5 BILLION ROADS, MARITIME AND FREIGHT BUDGET

Roads and Freight Minister Duncan Gay announced the 2014-15 State Budget would deliver an historic $4 billion for roads, maritime and freight projects in rural and regional NSW.

"Since March 2011, the NSW Liberals and Nationals Government has committed more than $15 billion to build and refurbish critical road, maritime and freight infrastructure in country NSW," Minister Gay said.

"The historic $5.5 billion State Budget for roads, maritime and freight projects is a great win for everyone across the state and is particularly strong for country NSW."

The historic $4 billion allocation to country NSW comes off the back of recent record funding commitments including $3.7 billion spent in 2011-12, $3.8 billion spent in 2012-13 and $3.9 billion allocated in 2013-14.

Major initiatives for rural and regional roads, maritime and freight infrastructure include:

- $1.2 billion (including $393.6 million from NSW) to continue the upgrade of the Pacific Highway to a four-lane, divided road between Hexham and the Queensland border (due for completion by the end of the decade), plus maintenance funding for the highway of $44 million.

- $185 million to continue upgrading the Princes Highway to a four-lane, divided road, including $80 million for the Foxground and Berry Bypass and $76.5 million for the Gerringong Upgrade (Mount Pleasant to Toolijooa Road), plus maintenance funding for the highway of $52 million.

- $113 million to continue upgrading the Great Western Highway (includes Federal funding of $40 million), including completing the Woodford to Hazelbrook ($13 million), Bullaburra Ridge Street to Genevieve Road ($22 million) and Bullaburra to Wentworth Falls ($12 million) upgrades. $22 million has also been allocated to commence works on upgrading the highway at Kelso.

In addition to this capital expenditure, the Great Western Highway has also been allocated $21 million in 2014-15 in maintenance funding.

- $70 million for upgrades to Central Coast roads (includes Federal funding of $6 million), including the intersection of the Central Coast Highway with Brisbane Water Drive and Manns Road ($24 million) and intersection upgrades along Wyong Road and Terrigal Drive, plus maintenance funding for Central Coast roads of $39 million.

- $69 million for major road upgrades in country NSW, including constructing the second stage of the Moree Bypass, additional overtaking lanes on the Newell Highway, further safety works on the Barton Highway, replacing the Tangaratta Bridge and its approaches on the Oxley Highway, further upgrades to Gocup Road and planning the upgrade at Bolivia Hill on the New England Highway.

Minister Gay also announced a state-wide roads maintenance commitment of $1.429 billion, with $827 million of this funding allocated to repairing roads, bridges and culverts in rural and regional NSW, including:
$1.8 million towards repairing the bridge over Whalan Creek on the Newell Highway near Goondiwindi.

$1 million towards repairing the bridge over Coxs River on Jenolan Caves Road at Glenroy.

$1 million towards repairing Colemans Bridge over Leycester Creek on Union Street at Lismore.

$750,000 towards repairing Dennis Bridge over Hastings River on Pacific Highway at Blackmans Point.

$500,000 towards repairing Cohens Bridge over the Namoi River on Kelvin Road at Gunnedah.

$500,000 towards repairing the bridge over Murray River on Yanga Way at Tooleybuc.

Other key highlights of the 2014 -15 Budget for country NSW include:

Freight

$283 million ($99.4 million from NSW and $183.5 million from the Australian Government) to continue work on the Northern Sydney Freight Corridor to improve rail freight access through the Sydney-Newcastle rail corridor between Strathfield and Broadmeadow. This work will result in significant efficiency gains for rail freight flowing from northwest NSW to Port Botany including commodities such as cotton, wool and containerised grains.

$77 million (including $46 million from NSW) to continue to support productivity and safety for road freight in country NSW, including extending the ‘Bridges for the Bush’ program to upgrade or replace critical bridges, and building and upgrading truck rest areas.

$44 million to continue maintenance and upgrade works on grain rail lines in country NSW. This is part of an overall record five-year $277 million program of works (2012-13 to 2016-17) to refurbish grain rail lines in NSW.

$6 million to commence a program of rail infrastructure upgrades at key sites on the Country Regional Network to improve freight train loading rates for grain.

Roads

$16 million to continue the Bells Line of Road Corridor Improvement Program (Stage 1), including additional overtaking lanes, safety works and road realignments.

This funding is part of a $43 million program of improvement works for Bells Line of Road, including the provision of additional overtaking lanes, safety works and road realignments.

$2.5 million to start initial sealing work on Main Road 54 (Crookwell to Bathurst road).

$2.2 million to continue planning and preconstruction for the Queanbeyan Bypass (Ellerton Drive Extension).

The NSW and Australian governments have also secured $50 million (including a reservation of $12.5 million from Restart NSW) to commence construction of the Bypass in mid-2015.
$2 million to continue planning and preconstruction works for Goanna Hill realignment on the Mitchell Highway.

Maritime

$10 million in grants to local councils to co-fund important boating infrastructure projects across NSW, including: boat ramps, floating pontoons, sewerage pump-out facilities and dinghy and kayak storage solutions.

$10 million to provide boating infrastructure and improve boating safety in the Port of Eden and surrounding areas.

Restart NSW

Minister Gay said roads and freight in rural and regional NSW would also see a massive boost in the immediate future from new reservations from the state’s dedicated infrastructure fund, Restart NSW, including:

- $200 million for a Regional Freight Pinch Point and Safety Program, including proposed improvement works on the Bells Line of Road, Golden Highway, Kings Highway and Gocup Road.
- $177 million to commence construction of the second crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton;
- $150 million towards construction of the $280 million fifth and final stage of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass (Rankin Park to Jesmond), with the remainder to be funded by Transport for NSW/Roads and Maritime Services.
- $50 million for a Western NSW Freight Productivity Program, including fast-tracking sealing work on the Cobb and Silver City highways;
- $37.5 million for Fixing Country Roads – a program to partner with councils and industry to identify and prioritise projects to eliminate missing links (or ‘last mile’ constraints) for high productivity trucks on local and regional roads.

“For too long, regional and rural NSW were forgotten by former Labor governments,” Minister Gay said.

“The 2014-15 State Budget reflects the ongoing commitment from the NSW Government to deliver quality infrastructure and services to ease congestion, better connect communities, support the nation’s freight task and ensure road and waterway users can access safer and more reliable travel.”

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