Joint Media Statement

9 October 2014

Bridges for the Bush: Contract awarded for new Kapooka Bridge

DEPUTY Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss and NSW Minister for Roads and Freight Duncan Gay today announced BMD Constructions has been awarded the contract to build the new Olympic Highway bridge at Kapooka, about 7.5 kilometres south of Wagga Wagga.

The Australian and NSW Governments have each allocated $27.5 million to build the new bridge. The project will see the existing bridge demolished and a new structure built to support double-stacked containers. This will form part of the Inland Rail network.

“The project is funded under the NSW Bridges for the Bush program, which aims to remove freight pinch points and improve aging infrastructure in country NSW,” Mr Truss said.

“Early work underway since June includes surveying, fencing and adjustment of utilities, with major work on track to start in November, weather permitting.”

“Once built, the new two-lane bridge will run over the main southern railway line moving the Olympic Highway slightly east and providing a consistent 100 km/h speed limit.”

Mr Gay said the Australian and NSW Governments were working together to ensure this critical piece of infrastructure was delivered to the businesses and communities along the Olympic Highway.

“Kapooka Rail Bridge is carrying an increasing number of heavy freight vehicles – about 300,000 truck movements each year,” Mr Gay said.

“Half the nation’s and three quarters of all interstate road freight journeys are on our roads. Unlike former Labor governments, we understand it is vital to invest in regional infrastructure to boost economic growth.”

Federal Member for Riverina Michael McCormack said the existing bridge, which was built in 1880, features two 90-degree bends on the approaches, where there has been a history of crashes.

“In its current form, the bridge restricts higher productivity freight on this route,” Mr McCormack said.
The bridge at Kapooka is currently the only remaining section of the Olympic Highway posing a restriction on Higher Mass Limit vehicles. The planned upgrades will complete accessibility for Higher Mass Limit usage of this route.

NSW Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for Regional and Rural Affairs and Member for Wagga Wagga Daryl Maguire said work was expected to be completed on the bridge in mid-2016, weather permitting.

“The new bridge would allow for increased freight efficiency and better access for cyclists with wider road shoulders to be installed as part of the work,” Mr Maguire said.

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