MEDIA RELEASE

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New initiatives to improve the Intelligent Access Program

NSW Minister for Roads and Ports Duncan Gay today announced a number of new initiatives to improve the Intelligent Access Program, specifically addressing issues of cost and flexibility.

“The IAP is a national program and was introduced in NSW in 2006 to support road freight productivity and provide an option for transport operators wanting to operate at Higher Mass Limits (HML) and for some restricted access heavy vehicles such as mobile cranes,” Minister Gay said.

“The IAP uses satellite technology to monitor heavy vehicles to ensure they are operating at the right loads on the right roads. It acts as both a regulatory and business tool designed to increase compliance, help protect and preserve pavements, bridges and culverts, and to make sharing roads with heavy vehicles safer.”

A severe lack of investment by previous State Labor governments in critical transport and freight infrastructure has left numerous structures on NSW roads in a poor condition resulting in them not being able to bear the load of some heavy vehicle combinations.

“Some of these structures act as a choke point in the road network placing a handbrake on enhancing freight productivity not just in NSW but right across the nation.

“Let’s not forget that NSW is a ‘through’ state for national freight – our roads carry approximately 63 per cent of Australia’s total freight task,” said Minister Gay.

On NSW owned and managed roads there are approximately 3,000 timber, concrete and steel bridges that require active monitoring, while local governments deal with a stockpile of about 8,000 bridges.

“In the last two State Budgets, the NSW Government has delivered record funding for roads of more than $10 billion. Recently, we also committed an extra $135 million for ‘Bridges for the Bush’.

“Rather than being intimidated by the sheer magnitude of the infrastructure task before us, we are getting on with the job of fixing things.

“Since coming to office, we have also carried out a number of significant assessments on road pavements and structures to allow an additional 1,273 kilometres to be opened-up for HML. Allowing modern road trains to operate east of the Newell Highway between Narrabri and the Gunnedah Regional Saleyards is a good case in point.”
In May this year at the Australian Trucking Convention, the government announced the new NSW Road Freight Industry Council would conduct a detailed examination into the operational and financial ‘pros and cons’ of the IAP.

As part of this examination, the Council was asked to work with industry, RMS, local government, NRMA and Transport Certification Australia (TCA) to consider improvements to the usability and cost of the IAP for transport operators.

At a Council meeting last week, all these stakeholders provided presentations on the IAP, including industry representatives from the Australian Trucking Association, NatRoad and the Livestock and Bulk Carriers Association of NSW.

Minister Gay said a key initiative to emerge from the meeting was a new entry options scheme to make it easier for transport operators to have their existing in-vehicle units assessed and type-approved to comply with national IAP standards.

"TCA confirmed they have been working with Simon National Carriers, Toll Group and Boral to assess and explore the standard of their devices.

"Discussions focused on a more flexible approach to allow transport operators to have their existing In-Vehicle Units (IVUs) assessed for use in the IAP."

Another initiative announced by TCA was the development of flexible IAP pricing options for transport operators.

At the meeting, transport operators indicated that for a large part of the industry only a small proportion of trips are loaded to HML. The occasional productivity gains from HML are therefore not always sufficient to cover the overall cost of IAP enrolment.

"In response, flexible pricing arrangements will be developed by IAP Service Providers for transport operators that load to HML on an occasional basis.

"The availability of flexible pricing means operators will be able to enrol more of their vehicles into the IAP and have the flexibility of using vehicles to carry HML loads when they need to, and to pay on that basis.

"This can provide more flexible options for operators who occasionally need to load vehicles to HML, improving productivity and reducing overall costs," said Minister Gay.

Boral has started preparations to reap the benefits of the new initiatives by having its existing In-Vehicle Units (IVUs) assessed for use in the IAP and have indicated they plan to utilise flexible pricing when it becomes available through IAP Service Providers.

"Presentations and discussions were lively and included further potential options to improve route assurance in NSW while continuing to cut red tape and costs for the road freight industry.

“RMS also committed to produce Google-based maps for approved HML routes as has been done for other restricted vehicle combinations which will provide another tool for heavy vehicle drivers to ensure they are on the correct route.

"I encourage industry participants to embrace the more flexible approach to the IAP, and the flexible pricing options, as they take effect," Minister Gay said.

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