FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE          Wednesday November 18, 2009

M5 IMPROVEMENTS VITAL TO INCREASE CAPACITY

The proposed widening and new tunnels on the M5 Motorway will provide essential increases to transport capacity on Sydney’s roads network, according to peak national body, Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF).

TTF Executive Director Brett Gale said the M5 is a vital passenger and freight corridor.

“The M5 is one of Sydney’s most important roads,” Mr Gale said, “as part of the city’s orbital motorway network, linking the city’s southwest to the airport and providing access to the CBD.”

“With massive population growth planned for the southwest, the M5 will become increasingly important.

“Congestion already costs Sydney $12.5 million a day, and unless capacity constraints are addressed, that figure will continue to rise.

“The motorway is already at capacity during peak periods and with traffic demand continuing to grow, it’s critical that steps are taken now to ensure that future demand can be met.”

Mr Gale said the expansion will better link significant trade and industrial zones.

“Improving transport links can have major economic benefits, and this proposal could help take taking heavy traffic off local roads; an important consideration with the freight task at Port Botany to double to 3 million container units a year by 2021.

“However, it’s crucial that this expansion is part of an integrated transport strategy which takes into account revised population growth figures showing Sydney’s population is likely to reach 7 million by the middle of the century.

“TTF will be taking an active role during the consultation phase of this project.

“TTF awaits further announcements on planning timetables and is particularly interested in hearing how the M5 East project will be funded.”

<ENDS>
Media contact: Rowan Barker - 0401 136 230