

MEDIA RELEASE



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RUDD GOVERNMENT DELIVERS BETTER, SAFER ROADS

The Australian Government's \$42 billion Nation Building and Jobs Plan will deliver better and safer roads, as well as an immediate boost to the economy.

The Chairman of the Australian Trucking Association, Trevor Martyn, said the road maintenance and safety measures in the plan delivered on some of the trucking industry's key concerns about the road system.

"The Nation Building and Jobs Plan gets two thumbs up from the trucking industry," Mr Martyn said.

"We are very pleased the Government has looked beyond tomorrow's headlines and is putting money into fixing the roads and making them safer. Every road user will benefit from the Government's plan. Australia's truck drivers will benefit the most, because our drivers are on the road every day, delivering 75 per cent of Australia's freight."

The Government will spend an extra \$150 million in 2008-09 to help the states and territories fund the backlog of maintenance projects on the AusLink National Network.

"As the ATA argued in our pre-budget submission, Australia's existing roads are just plain worn out and desperately need more road maintenance spending," Mr Martyn said.

"The Government has listened to our concerns. Its extra funding will help the states and territories do more road maintenance and will deliver an immediate economic boost, because maintenance projects can get started very quickly.

"The spending will improve safety, reduce truck operating costs and could also allow higher mass loadings on some parts of the road system," he said.

The Government will invest \$50 million in 2008-09 and \$100 million in 2009-10 to speed up the installation of boom gates and other active control measures at about 200 high risk level crossings.

"Level crossing accidents involving trucks can be catastrophic, so improving level crossing safety is a high priority for the trucking industry," Mr Martyn said.

"There are thousands of level crossings in Australia that do not have active warning systems like flashing lights or boom gates. These level crossings can be a safety risk, and we are very pleased that the Government is taking action."

The Government will allocate an additional \$30 million in 2008-09 and \$60 million in 2009-10 to extend the Black Spot Program, which funds safety improvements at road locations that have a history of serious accidents or a high accident risk. The funding will deliver an extra 350 black spot projects.

"The Black Spot Program has prevented countless crashes since it was established, with low cost fixes like stop signs, roundabouts, and better visibility at intersections. The Government's decision will enable the program to stop even more accidents on our roads," Mr Martyn said.

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National Voice of the Australian Trucking Industry