



Transport Workers' Union of NSW

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11 September 2020

The Hon Andrew Constance
Minister for Transport and Roads

Dear Minister Constance

RE: Road Tolls Take their Tax on Small Businesses and Working Families

As you would be aware, the people of New South Wales are experiencing the most significant economic downturn in recent history and it is taking its toll on families and small businesses. These are the people you, as a member of the Government, have promised to protect and serve.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing economic crisis, the **Transport Workers** of New South Wales have kept the State's economy moving. **Transport Workers** have ensured the delivery of essential goods, such as groceries and medical supplies to families, hospitals and businesses. **Transport Workers** have kept our economy moving by ensuring the movement of freight between businesses and other states. **Transport Workers** have kept businesses connected with their clients through efficient and safe deliveries to their customers.

Transport Workers have achieved all of this without any extra compensation for the additional cost burdens that inevitably come with the hard work they have been doing, while they themselves are also having to endure the increased financial pressures of a recession.

Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Transport Industry was already an extremely competitive industry, with paper thin margins driven by those at the top of the supply chain which lead to countless Transport Operators cutting corners on safety and compliance just to stay in business. The TWU knows that Transport Operators of all shapes and sizes, from huge multi-national corporations who employ thousands of workers in NSW, to small-business owner-drivers who operate one vehicle, are enduring extreme financial pressures that is resulting in the loss of jobs and skilled workers in the Transport Industry.

In these extraordinary times, the last thing that the **Transport Workers** of New South Wales need right now is another unavoidable and unreasonable cost impost that could push them beyond breaking point, particularly one legislated and controlled by the NSW Government. However, that is exactly what the constant introduction and increasing of Road Tolls is and will continue to do to **Transport Workers** in New South Wales.

Many **Transport Workers** have no choice but to take toll roads, particularly when it means keeping customers happy, goods delivered on time, their bosses off their back and the economy moving. In fact, **Transport Workers** will have no choice but to take the new NorthConnex Toll Road at \$23.73 each one-way trip, or face a whopping \$194 fine for driving on Pennant Hills Road. But currently, most **Transport Workers**, particularly Small-Business Owner Drivers, will themselves have to bear the full cost of these outrageously large Tolls, with no way of being able to recoup this cost from those at the top of supply chains.

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Minister, the reality is that Road Tolls are a **Tax** on Small Businesses and the working families of New South Wales who have been keeping this State moving during the COVID-19 Pandemic. **Transport Workers** cannot afford these continuous targeted taxes without any ability to pass on or share their cost.

That is why I am writing to ask that you, as the Minister for Transport and Roads in a Government that claims to be supportive of Small-Business and Working Families, immediately commit to the following measures to protect and provide relief to **Transport Workers** in New South Wales:

- (1) Commit that there will be **No New Tolls** on new roads built in NSW.
- (2) Provide full compensation to **Transport Workers** and Transport Companies that employ Working Families for the use of all Toll Roads from March 2020 until the COVID-19 Pandemic is over.
- (3) Cease all new Toll Increases that apply to **Transport Workers** until the COVID-19 Pandemic is over.
- (4) Legislate a daily cap on all Tolls paid by **Transport Workers** on existing Toll Roads in NSW.
- (5) Support the TWU's current application before the Industrial Relations Commission to provide compensation to Small-Business Owner Drivers for the use of Toll Roads when they are required to use them by their Principal Contractors and their Clients.
- (6) Mandating and enforcing that all **Transport Workers** and the Contractors that engage them that perform work on Government contracts are paid within thirty days of issuing invoices.
- (7) Mandating and ensuring that all **Transport Workers** that perform work on Government contracts are provided with fair and safe rates of pay and conditions.

These commitments will provide immediate relief and certainty for **Transport Workers** and businesses across this State.

These are the actions that **Transport Workers** and the Working Families of New South Wales should expect from their Government in the middle of crisis, not targeted and unreasonable taxes disguised as tolls that only makes things worse.

I call on you and the NSW Government to take this immediate action to support the **Transport Workers** of this great State so that they can keep the New South Wales economy moving during this most difficult time.

Yours faithfully

Transport Workers Union of NSW



Richard Olsen
Secretary