Joint Media Statement

8 October 2014

Outback Way on the way

RECORD funding has been secured for the Outback Way in the Northern Territory, with a joint Federal and Territory Government $40 million commitment announced today.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss said the Australian Government has committed $20 million for the road link, which the Northern Territory Government has agreed to match dollar for dollar.

“Billed as Australia’s longest shortcut (Cairns to Perth) the Outback Way traverses the most remote parts of Australia and is likely to punch well above its weight in terms of importance to our economy,” Mr Truss said.

“Our regional and remote tourism, mining and freight industries use this route through Western Australian, the Northern Territory and Queensland.

“This funding will help unlock the potential benefits of outback roads to the Australian and Northern Territory economies.”

Northern Territory Chief Minister Adam Giles said the upgrade would improve access to many remote indigenous communities across the northern half of Australia.

“This investment is about improving access to our remote communities and increasing the prosperity of these regions,” Mr Giles said.

“The full scope of works is still being considered, but already this financial year construction will begin on extending the sealed length of the Plenty Highway up towards Harts Range. We are also allocating funding for design work on the flood plain crossing on the Docker River Road which often disrupts traffic.”

These immediate works have been welcomed by the Outback Highway Development Council.

“The works on the Plenty and Docker River Road will be a game changer for locals, tourism and industry. The Docker River Road is critical for the connectivity of the route and the integrity of the Outback Highway project.” OHDC general manager Helen Lewis said.

Mr Truss said the Australian Government was working with state, territory and local governments across the nation to ensure the Outback Way remains a valuable trans-national link across the heart of Australia.

In March, the Australian Government, Queensland Government and seven western Queensland councils signed a funding agreement worth $24.5 million to upgrade the Queensland section of the Outback Way.

The Australian Government has committed $33 million nationally to the upgrade of the Outback Way.

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