



Dr Chris Burns

MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

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GOVERNMENT WELCOMES VICTORIA HWY FUNDING

The Northern Territory Government has welcomed Federal Government funding for the Victoria Highway announced in tonight's Federal Budget.

Infrastructure and Transport Minister Dr Chris Burns said the Budget allocated a further \$30 million to upgrade the Victoria Highway, the Territory's major freight route to Western Australia.

"This complements the \$29 million Auslink program to upgrade the flood immunity of the Victoria Highway where it crosses the Victoria River floodplain," Dr Burns said.

"The Victoria River Crossing is usually closed each Wet Season when floodwaters rise over the bridge and approaches.

"Upgrading the Victoria Highway will enhance transport links to Western Australia, as well as improving access to the Defence Department's Bradshaw Field Training Area near Timber Creek.

"The total works will be managed by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure."

While welcoming the capital injection, Dr Burns said he remained concerned that the Northern Territory's share of maintenance funding for the National Network (the Stuart, Victoria and Barkly highways) was set to fall from \$18.2 million a year to just over \$14 million a year.

"This will clearly disadvantage the Territory," Dr Burns said. "We will continue to lobby the Federal Government for a fair share of funding for repairs and maintenance, particularly given the recent damage caused by flooding and Cyclone Monica."

Dr Burns said he would also continue to argue for catch-up funding for Territory roads in unincorporated areas, which received a one-off grant of \$4 million in tonight's Budget.

"These Outback roads are crucial for the pastoral and mining industries, as well as for our remote communities," Dr Burns said.

"They missed out on \$20 million in Federal funding under the "Roads to Recovery" program.

"Along with organisations like the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association, we will continue to lobby for catch-up investment in this vital infrastructure."

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