

## **NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 27 June 2014**

### **MAJOR MILESTONES REACHED ON NORTH WEST RAIL LINK**

- The \$8.3 billion North West Rail Link has reached its most important milestone yet, with a preferred operator selected to run the new rapid transit service.
- The Northwest Rapid Transit consortium – made up of MTR Corporation (Australia), John Holland, Leighton Contractors, UGL Rail Services and Plenary Group – has been selected to deliver the project's operations contract
- The contract includes building the eight brand new railway stations, delivering 4,000 commuter car parking spaces, and supplying Sydney's new generation, fully-automated rapid transit trains. The NSW Government will now work with the consortium to further negotiate and finalise this multi-billion-dollar contract, which is expected to be awarded later this year.
- The first Tunnel Boring Machine (named 'Elizabeth' by a local student after colonial icon Elizabeth Rouse) is now on its way to Australia from France via China and will be in the ground by October. The second machine is due by the end of this year.

### **WORKERS BENEFIT FROM GOVERNMENT'S SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

- The NSW Government has announced several enhancements to the workers compensation scheme to better support injured workers returning to work.
- State Labor left the scheme in a mess with a \$4.1 billion black hole, businesses were facing premium rises of up to 28 per cent and 12,000 jobs were at risk.
- Now that the NSW Government has pulled the scheme out of Labor's deficit and returned it to surplus, it is in a position to better support the State's workers.
- The new enhancements to the scheme show the NSW Government is meeting its objectives of increasing support for seriously injured workers and better assisting people to return to work.

### **WORLDWIDE INTEREST IN WESTCONNEX M4 EAST**

- The Commonwealth and NSW Governments are getting on with delivering Stage One of WestConnex, as four expressions of interest were received from joint ventures from around the world in a bid to secure a contract for WestConnex M4 East.

- Submissions were received from Thiess Samsung John Holland joint venture, Lend Lease Bouygues joint venture, Future Connect (Acciona Obayashi McConnell Dowell Ghella joint venture) and Salini Impregilo joint venture.
- The overwhelming response from industry to get involved in the State's largest road infrastructure project will help stimulate competition, drive down project costs and create new local employment and business opportunities. Work will now start on assessing the submissions and next month a request for tender will be issued to shortlisted joint ventures.
- WestConnex is expected to save 40 minutes on a typical travel journey between Parramatta and Sydney Airport by bypassing up to 52 sets of traffic lights, helping the city cope with an expected population increase of 1.3 million over the next 20 years.

## **SMARTER PLANNING FOR SYDNEY**

- The NSW Government has announced the transformation of the run-down industrial area of Wentworth Point will proceed, and draft plans for the Herring Road precinct at Macquarie Park will be put on display for comment.
- About 7,700 new homes are to be built in these two Sydney suburbs, close to jobs and transport as part of the NSW Government's commitment to putting downward pressure on home prices.
- Smarter planning means identifying underutilised land where new homes can be built close to jobs and transport services.
- The transformation of these suburbs will not only provide new housing, but will also stimulate the construction sector and create thousands of jobs.

## **STRONGER POWERS FOR PRINCIPALS**

- NSW public school principals have been given strengthened powers and shorter timelines to deal with underperformance and teachers who do not follow guidelines, bringing expectations for public school teachers into line with contemporary procedures used in most businesses.
- Overwhelmingly, teachers are doing a great job but we can't afford to relax and the NSW Government makes no apologies for setting very high standards.
- Teachers who fail to perform to expected standards can be stood down from the classroom in 10 weeks – about half the time it currently takes a principal to tackle underperformance.
- School staff who do not follow reasonable directions can be issued with a written warning. A subsequent breach would lead to a further official warning and a third breach may lead to disciplinary action – which in some cases could lead to demotion or dismissal.

## **REDUCING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

- The NSW Government has welcomed the release of the *Second Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children*, a vital initiative of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments who are standing together to address this important national issue.
- The release of this report shows the Commonwealth and the States are committed to working together to eliminate violence against women and children.
- All forms of violence against women and their children are utterly reprehensible, which is why this united and coordinated approach is vitally important.
- While we have strong commitment from all levels of Government, we also need the community to take a stand to tackle this critical issue. As the plan makes clear, reducing violence against women and children is everyone's responsibility.

## **FIRST LOOK INSIDE CAMPBELLTOWN HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT**

- The Premier and Health Minister have had their first look inside the Campbelltown Hospital redevelopment which is quickly taking shape and will be open to patients early next year.
- The centrepiece of the \$134 million redevelopment – the multi-storey Acute Services Building - is on target for construction completion in December.
- The new look Campbelltown Hospital, which will include an additional 90 inpatient beds and an expanded emergency department, will ensure families in South Western Sydney have access to a world class hospital.
- Health Minister Jillian Skinner says she shares the excitement of the clinicians, staff and community as the impressive building takes shape.

## **MORE CARS DEEMED SAFE FOR YOUNG DRIVERS**

- P-platers will now be able to drive a wider range of safe vehicles to help make life easier for families and young drivers.
- New rules to be introduced from 1 August will provide P-platers and their families with 6,500 more options after the Centre for Road Safety redefined high performance vehicles to better reflect recent trends.
- The previous blanket ban on P-platers driving supercharged or turbocharged vehicles was put in place when the features on these cars were only used to enhance speed and acceleration.
- Advances in technology mean the new features in many vehicles are now about fuel efficiency, not speed and acceleration, so it was appropriate to revisit the ban in light of the fact many of these vehicles are low performance with modern, effective safety features.

## HOSPITALS BENEFIT FROM NEW ELECTRIC BEDS

- Hunter New England Local Health District hospitals will receive 859 new electric beds as part of a bed replacement program.
- Every manual bed in the District will be replaced with an electric bed including almost 300 at John Hunter.
- The \$3.3 million investment is a fantastic example of the ways in which Local Health Districts are managing their budgets and making decisions in the best interests of their patients.
- Electric beds make the job of nurses safer and easier – they can be lowered closer to the ground than the manual beds, reducing the risk of patients having a fall and of nurses being injured when moving patients in and out of beds.

## SALE OF MACQUARIE GENERATION

- The NSW Government has welcomed the Australian Competition Tribunal's decision to allow the sale of Macquarie Generation to AGL Energy.
- The NSW Government has said it would only proceed with the sale if it was in the best interests of the community – and the Australian Competition Tribunal has confirmed that view.
- The Tribunal found that the likely market structure after this transaction “...*will produce a vigorous competitive market.*”
- The sale of Macquarie Generation to AGL Energy would free up additional funds for critical infrastructure across the State.

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