

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 20 MAY 2016

OPAL FARE REFORMS

- The NSW Government announced there will be no increase to set fares for Opal card customers this year meaning fares on trains and ferries won't have increased since January 2015 or on buses and light rail since 2014.
- The Government also announced key elements of the Opal Card system which will not change:
 - Current Opal card fares and fare bands remain the same
 - No changes to the Opal card daily, weekly or Sunday fare caps
 - No changes to the Gold Senior/Pensioner Opal card eligibility criteria or to the daily fare cap of \$2.50
- A new \$2 'transfer discount' will be given every time an adult Opal customer changes modes of transport within an hour, as part of the same journey.
- Switching between trains, buses, ferries and light rail will become cheaper for thousands of commuters with Opal to remove the current penalty when customers change transport modes.
- This will make it cheaper to change between trains, buses, ferries and light rail and encourage people out of their cars and onto public transport

A NEW GENERATION OF HEALTH CARE

- A new generation of health care has arrived in Western Sydney with the official opening of Blacktown Hospital's new seven-storey Clinical Services Building.
- The new building is the centrepiece of the \$312 million Stage 1 redevelopment which includes a comprehensive cancer centre with a new radiation therapy unit, as well as units for cardiac, respiratory medicine, aged

care, stroke and rehabilitation, neurophysiology, pharmacy, pathology and a women's health clinic.

- The NSW Government is investing more than \$700 million in two building stages at Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals.
- The NSW Government is committed to ensuring the health care needs of this rapidly growing region are met for decades to come, with work now commenced on the \$400 million Stage 2 redevelopment.

NSW THE NATION'S JOBS ENGINE ROOM

- The NSW economy continues to outperform the nation with new figures this week confirming NSW has added 83,300 full-time jobs in the last 12 months. NSW accounted for all but 600 of the full-time new jobs created nationally.
- Overall NSW added over 124,700 jobs over the past year – the strongest result of any state – and more than all other states combined.
- NSW remains the top jobs market in the country, recording the lowest unemployment rate for the 11th consecutive month.
- More than 305,000 jobs have been created in NSW since the Liberals and Nationals came to office in 2011 and the NSW Government is committed to ensuring further job creation.

SETTING THE BAR FOR HIGH-QUALITY TRAINING RESULTS

- The NSW Government has released the *Statement of Expectations for Smart and Skilled Providers* for the 450 training providers supported under the Smart and Skilled initiative.
- The document clearly outlines the obligations on the training providers to deliver quality training, practice strong ethics and accountability and provides clear accountabilities if they are to continue to receive government support.
- This initiative also includes an agreement between the Department of Industry and NSW Fair Trading who will share information to maintain the ongoing integrity of the State's training sector.

- The NSW Government is committed to delivering continued high-quality training and ethical behaviour from training providers and providing greater protections for students.

MICRO MUSIC FESTIVALS TO SHOWCASE WESTERN SYDNEY'S TALENT

- The NSW Government has committed \$150,000 as part of a new funding initiative to promote live music in the state's fastest-growing region.
- Councils have been invited to submit proposals for family-friendly, community-based micro music festivals.
- With a strong youth focus, the festivals will provide employment and opportunities for Western Sydney based musicians to celebrate their local communities and raise their profiles.
- This funding is part of the NSW Government's \$7.5 million boost to Western Sydney arts and culture in the next four years.

NEW GRAMMAR RESOURCE TO IMPROVE K-6 LANGUAGE TEACHING

- The NSW Government has launched a new resource for teachers, *Grammar: A Guide for Teachers K-6* to assist them in teaching grammar to students in primary schools.
- Grammar is integral to providing students with the building blocks to speak and write with clarity and confidence.
- The guide has been developed to assist teachers new to the profession, as well as those with extensive classroom experience.

NSW SHOWS LEADERHIP IN ENERGY STORAGE

- The NSW Government has launched the Australian Energy Storage Database, a platform to provide information to investors, developers, policy makers and researchers.
- The Database maps out and tracks the progress of current and prospective commercial and utility-scale energy storage projects.
- For first time, players in the renewable energy sector will be able to see a complete picture of energy storage penetration and potential in NSW, enabling better decisions on future renewable energy investment.

- With nearly 20 NSW energy storage projects listed across Sydney, the Hunter, the Central West and the State's south, the database is recognition of the significant role energy storage can play in the future of the renewable energy sector.