

## **NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 3 JUNE 2016**

### **LIGHTS ON! VIVID SYDNEY SHINES IN 2016**

- The NSW Government launched this year's Vivid Sydney Festival which will see Sydney shine in a kaleidoscope of colour, music and creativity for the next 23 nights.
- Vivid Sydney has established itself as the world's largest festival of light, music and ideas, attracting the world's leading creative minds, lighting artists and musicians.
- This year Vivid Sydney is set to be the biggest and best yet as Taronga Zoo and the harbour side of the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney are lit for the first time.

### **HOUSEHOLDS TO BENEFIT FROM NEW LPG REBATE**

- More than 80,000 vulnerable, low-income household across NSW that use Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to power their homes are expected to benefit from a new rebate.
- The NSW Government announced the \$90 Gas Rebate will be extended to households relying on reticulated or delivered LPG for heating, cooking and powering their hot water systems.
- The \$8 million initiative recognises that vulnerable residences not connected to gas networks are equally deserving of a rebate as those that are. The average LPG household bill is between \$500 to \$550.
- The NSW Government is committed to supporting the most vulnerable members of our community and driving down the cost of gas and electricity.

## **BILL INTRODUCED FOR POINT TO POINT TRANSPORT REFORMS**

- The NSW Government has introduced legislation to overhaul out-dated transport regulation for taxis, hire cars and rideshare services.
- The new laws place more safety responsibility on the companies who facilitate point to point services and create a new regulator with strong investigatory powers to look into any point to point service. Service providers will face significant penalties if it's found they failed to undertake the required checks of drivers, or inspections of vehicles.
- The legislation also includes a \$250 million industry adjustment assistance fund including:
  - \$98 million for transition assistance of \$20,000 per perpetual licence, for up to two licences, for taxi licensees who obtained a licence before 1 July 2015, to help them adjust to a more competitive market,
  - \$142 million for taxi licensees facing hardship as a result of the changes,
  - Up to \$10 million for a buy-back scheme for perpetual hire car licensees.

## **GET SOME MORE NSW SEAFOOD ON YOUR PLATE**

- Changes to commercial fishing in NSW will herald a new era for the industry and ensure the supply of locally caught, high quality seafood continues into the future.
- The changes will see the NSW Government help fishers to invest in their businesses and provide the state's fishers with the tools to better manage their business and ensure what is caught continues to be done so sustainability.
- Under the new program, fishers will now have the option to grow their business through a range of supportive assistance measures including low interest rate loans of up to \$80,000 and grants to seek independent financial advice.
- \$400,000 will also be provided as part of a campaign to promote NSW caught seafood and to investigate an origin-labelling scheme for cooked seafood across the state.

## **NEW SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME DOING IT TOUGH**

- A NSW Government partnership will ensure that victims of crime with money problems receive free financial counselling.
- Under the new Comprehensive Services for Victims of Crime (CSVIC) partnership, the NSW Government's Victims Services will work with the Financial Counsellors Association of NSW (FCAN) to provide specialist help to victims of crime facing financial hardship.
- Victim Services will now be able to refer people to FCAN for free, independent and confidential financial counselling.

## **FAIRER SYSTEM FOR FUNDING FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES A STEP CLOSER**

- A fairer system for funding fire and emergency services is a step closer with legislation passing to establish the Emergency Services Property Levy (ESPL) Monitor.
- In December the Government announced it would abolish the insurance-based Emergency Services Levy (ESL) from 1 July 2017 and replace it with a property-based levy to be paid alongside council rates.
- Abolishing the insurance-based levy will reduce the cost of insurance premiums, enabling more people and businesses to take out insurance to protect their properties from fire, floods, storms and other natural disasters.
- The new Monitor will be responsible for ensuring that insurers pass on the benefits of abolishing the ESL to households and businesses, in the form of lower insurance premiums.

## **BOOST TO SUPPORT PAYMENTS FOR CUSTOMERS AND DRIVERS OF WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TAXIS**

- Eligible customers and drivers of Wheelchair Accessible Taxis (WATs) will have access to increased support payments from July 1 as part of a \$15.5 million boost to deliver more accessible services.
- The changes are expected to increase the number of WATs by offering loans and driver incentives and increased payments to customers.

- From July 1 eligible customers will have the cap on their trips doubled to \$60. WAT drivers will also have their incentive payment increased from \$7.70 to \$15 for trips that assist a wheelchair user.
- The NSW Government is committed to ensuring customers and drivers have the right mix of subsidies and incentives to help people travel.

## **PLANS IN FOR NEW GREEN OASIS AT MACQUARIE PARK**

- Residents and workers in Macquarie Park will enjoy a new green oasis as the NSW Government delivers on its promise to establish a 7,000 square metre park in Macquarie Park.
- The NSW Government has lodged a rezoning proposal to facilitate development of the new park and to transform part of a disused government block into a green community space, with high-end landscaping and community facilities.
- The remainder of the site will accommodate a new commercial development with the potential to deliver more than 8,000 permanent jobs for the area.

## **HISTORIC ABORIGINAL RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN LAUNCHED AT TAFE WESTERN**

- TAFE Western Institute has become the first TAFE in NSW to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which formalises TAFE's role in helping Aboriginal communities to gain vocational education and training.
- The RAP will apply across the Western Institute's 25 colleges and was launched as part of National Reconciliation Week.
- The five key objectives of the RAP are to improve:
  - Access to education and training for Aboriginal peoples;
  - Literacy and numeracy of our Aboriginal students;
  - Education and employment outcomes of our Aboriginal students;
  - Completion of qualifications by our Aboriginal students; and
  - The careers of Aboriginal staff.
- The RAP identifies specific strategies, timelines and targets that will improve outcomes for Aboriginal students, staff and communities.