

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 18 MARCH 2016

NSW JOBS UNDERPIN NATIONAL ECONOMIC STRENGTH

- ABS figures show that NSW has recorded the lowest unemployment rate in the nation and added more jobs over the last year than all of the other states combined.
- The NSW jobless rate fell to 5.3% in February, lower than the national 5.8% while 143,000 jobs were created in NSW over the last 12 months, accounting for almost 60% of the new jobs across Australia.
- NSW's strong employment conditions have been supported by ongoing strength in our housing construction sector, healthy consumer confidence and record and record infrastructure spending by the NSW Government.

BILLION DOLLAR DUBBO RARE METALS AND RARE EARTHS MINE AN ECONOMIC BOON

- Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy Anthony Roberts has announced that a billion dollar project in NSW's central west to mine rare metals and rare earths has now passed its final hurdle and will go ahead.
- After meeting a rigorous government approval process and being granted an Environment Protection Licence by the Environment Protection Authority, the 'Dubbo Zirconia Project' will proceed and is expected to produce up to 30,000 tonnes of speciality metals and rare earths per year.
- More than \$1 billion will be invested in the project, about \$50 million spent in the Dubbo region each year, about 450 people will be employed during construction and more than 250 when it is operating.

DEADLY SYNTHETIC DRUG CLASSIFICATION INCREASES

- The NSW Government will add three deadly synthetic drugs which are usually smoked or sold as 'herbal tea' to the most serious illicit drugs category.
- Synthetic drugs have been linked to multiple deaths in other jurisdictions, including the death of two men in Queensland caused by haemorrhaging of the lungs due to severe poisoning.
- A person found guilty of manufacturing or selling these synthetic drugs could face a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.
- These changes build on the NSW Government's campaign to stamp out ice which includes the introduction of harsher penalties for large scale dealers, new police powers to destroy illegal drugs sooner, improving health and safety for officers and freeing officers to from having to appear in court.

FUTURE TRANSPORT: REAL TIME BUS DATA EXPANDED ACROSS THE METRO NETWORK

- Customers can now follow their chosen service by accessing up to the minute service information on any of the 11 real time transport apps across the network from Nelson Bay in the north, Shellharbour in the south and west to Penrith.
- Over 900 million data serves were delivered to real-time apps in 2015, an increase of over 50% on the year before.
- The rollout of real-time data is part of the NSW Government's commitment to technology and a forward-thinking transport network.
- Work is underway to further expand real-time data across the Blue Mountains and Hunter Valley.

NEW INSTITUTE PUTS FOCUS ON ADOPTION

- The NSW Government has announced that the Sydney University has won the tender to establish the Institute of Open Adoption Studies, a research body that will advance adoption in NSW
- The Institute will receive \$2.85 million in funding over three years and is the first independent government funded adoption research body of its kind in Australia.

- The NSW Government is committed to increasing adoption numbers in NSW, particularly helping more vulnerable children in Out of Home Care into permanent and loving families and has also announced a further \$2 million to progress existing adaption applications.

NSW LEADS AUSTRALIA ON NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDER SCHEME

- NSW is the first State or Territory to introduce model laws that will hold domestic violence perpetrators accountable nationwide.
- A Bill was before Parliament this week that will mean Domestic Violence Orders will be automatically recognised and enforced across State and Territory lines, ensuring a victim will no longer need to register an interstate order in a NSW court which can be traumatising for victims.

NSW AGRICULTURE: RECORD EXPORT EARNINGS

- NSW agriculture exports earned a record \$6.7 billion in 2015, driven by strong global demand and assisted by the lower Australian dollar.
- The highest value exports were beef, wool, cotton and wheat and the biggest mover was legumes with the strongest percentage growth in 2015 of more than 200 per cent to value \$250 million.
- Wine exports moved into the top 2015 exports due to the growing demand for NSW wine in wine markets – increasing 9% to \$510 million.
- The NSW Government is supporting the growth of the \$12 billion primary industries sector which supports more than 100,000 jobs in regional NSW.

NSW EXTENDS LEAD OVER OTHER STATES

- The NSW economy is continuing to outperform the rest of the nation and has extended its lead ahead of the other states according to a recent ANZ Stateometer report.
- Despite challenges faced by other state economies, the report found economic activity in NSW has remained above trend and is accelerating.

- The NSW Liberals & Nationals have worked hard over the past 5 years to make NSW number one and this work is continuing to provide the quality services and infrastructure our state needs.

DOMESTIC VISITORS SPEND RECORD \$16 BILLION IN NSW

- Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events Stuart Ayres has welcomed new figures showing NSW has streaked further ahead as the nation's Number One tourism destination with domestic visitors spending a record \$16 billion last year.
- According to Tourism Research Australia's National Visitor Survey for 2015, NSW attracted 28.1 million visitors from across Australia during 2015, up 4.4% on the previous year, who stayed 91.1 million nights and spent \$16.1 billion.
- NSW received 8 million more domestic visitors than Queensland and about 6.5 million more visitors than Victoria.

SHARK SMART APP UPGRADE TRACKS SHARKS IN REAL-TIME

- The NSW Shark Smart app has been updated to now provide real time data of sharks' movements to beachgoers as part of the \$16 million Shark Management Strategy.
- The Shark Smart app is now providing key information about the movement of sharks along our coastline as well as providing important safety measures in place on the state's beaches.
- The updated app will send push notifications if a tagged shark is near a VR4G listening station or if an incident has occurred in the area recently.
- To date, VR4G satellite linked listening stations have been installed at Tweed Heads, Lennox Head, Evans Head and Yamba, South West Rocks, Lighthouse Beach near Ballina, Main Beach Port Macquarie and Forster with a further 12 to be deployed in the coming months.

TWO NEW PRECINCTS FOR VIVID SYDNEY 2016

- Premier Mike Baird and Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events Stuart Ayres has unveiled the program for this year's Vivid Sydney festival which will run for an extended 23 nights from 27 May to 18 June.

- The festival is the largest of its kind in the world and last year attracted a record 1.7 million domestic and international visitors to NSW.
- This year's Vivid Sydney program includes performances by New Order and Björk and conversations with director and producer Spike Jonze, House of Cards creator Beau Willimon and the creative force behind Orange is the New Black, Jenji Kohan.
- Further details of this year's Vivid Sydney festival can be found at vividSydney.com.