

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 21 March 2014

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE - GO AHEAD FOR NORTHCONNEX MOTORWAY

- The NSW Government is delivering another major infrastructure project with the go ahead given for the NorthConnex motorway, connecting the M1 and M2 under busy Pennant Hills Road.
- NorthConnex will be twin tunnels of about nine kilometres in length bypassing 21 sets of traffic lights – it is expected to take at least 5,000 trucks a day off Pennant Hills Road providing great relief to local communities.
- The more efficient movement of freight will deliver major benefits to the Australian and NSW economies, linking Newcastle and the Central Coast, Western and South Western Sydney and Melbourne by continuous motorway.
- We are building for the future by constructing the tunnel with a capacity for three lanes of traffic each way and, at 5.3 metres, it will be the highest tunnel in Sydney
- The NSW Government is delivering the project in partnership with the Federal Government and private sector – an EIS will be released in the coming months and if planning approval is received, construction could start within 12 months.

NSW GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO GO WEST

- More than 3,000 public servant positions will be relocated to new offices in Western Sydney in a move that will boost the region's economy and support local jobs as part of the NSW Government's 'decade of decentralisation' policy.
- The relocation of these agencies will provide more opportunities for Western Sydney residents who want to work closer to home, and help reduce congestion in the Sydney CBD.
- Agencies to move include the NSW Community Relations Commission, Ambulance Service of NSW, NSW Sport and Recreation, Office of Environment and Heritage, Environmental Protection Agency and the NSW Office of State Revenue.
- As current leases expire these agencies will be relocated to new offices in Penrith, Parramatta and Liverpool, ensuring staff are at the heart of communities they serve.

IT'S ON: MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

- Baseball stars from the Arizona Diamondbacks and Los Angeles Dodgers have settled into Sydney ahead of the MLB Opening Series – one of the biggest major events to be staged in Sydney since the Olympics.

- The MLB Opening Series will see the SCG packed for two matches and will be viewed by well over 150 million people across the world, generating massive economic impact for Sydney and NSW.
- The NSW Liberals & Nationals came to office with a commitment to grow the State's economy by bringing major events to NSW, and there is no surer sign we are delivering on our commitment than the MLB Opening Series.
- It's a big weekend in Sydney's major events calendar with the opening night of Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour's production of Madama Butterfly tonight, and the return of the spectacular free concert Sydney Symphony in Parramatta Park.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE: HUNTER EXPRESSWAY OPENS FOR BUSINESS

- Residents and freight operators alike have cause for celebration with the \$1.7 billion Hunter Expressway opening to traffic on Saturday 22 March 2014.
- Road users will save up to 28 minutes by using the 40 kilometre expressway from Branxton to the Pacific Motorway.
- The Hunter Expressway provides a more direct freight route from the Port of Newcastle to the regions of Central Queensland, Northern and Central NSW.
- Traffic on the New England Highway through Maitland is forecast to halve as traffic moves onto the expressway, with towns like Greta and Branxton seeing similar benefits – returning roads to local communities.

OPAL FAST-TRACKED TO ALL SYDNEY TRAIN STATIONS

- Opal electronic ticketing will be rolled out on the entire Sydney Trains network by 28 March, making Opal active at 190 train stations and marking the delivery of a key NSW Liberals & Nationals election commitment.
- On 28 March, Opal will become available to customers at an additional 70 Sydney Trains stations from Green Square to Macarthur, Erskineville to Liverpool and Lidcombe, Sydenham to Waterfall and Cronulla.
- A further extension on 4 April will see Opal fast-tracked to another 52 stations on the NSW TrainLink South Coast Line to Wollongong, Port Kembla and Bomaderry and the Southern Highlands Line to Goulburn.
- Opal is a game-changer for public transport customers by modernising the way people use public transport and putting an end to Sydney's Monday morning ticket queues, while also delivering lower fares, weekly travel rewards, daily caps and discounts for off-peak travel.

JOINT POLICE AND TRANSPORT OPERATION TARGETING CRIME

- The Police Transport Command and Transport for NSW are joining forces to target fare evasion and other offences on the public transport network.
- Operation Javelin IV is an intelligence-led, joint operation involving the Police Transport Command and Transport Officers, focusing on fare evaders at targeted locations in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

- There will be a highly-visible presence on trains, buses and ferries, and at major transport hubs.
- Since the Police Transport Command started, officers have made 4,220 arrests, laid 7,935 charges and issued 81,913 infringements.

NEW HIGH-TECH RAIL MAINTENANCE VEHICLES NOW ON TRACK

- Two new high-tech track maintenance vehicles are operating across the rail network to improve reliability and reduce lengthy and frustrating delays for customers.
- The two new Track Inspection Vehicles – each worth approximately \$20 million and a first for Australia – are able to automatically monitor and record the condition of the track and overhead wiring.
- After years of underinvestment under Labor, the NSW Government is investing heavily in upgrading the rail network and reducing maintenance delays.
- The vehicles mean rail workers will spend up to 15,000 fewer hours per year having to walk the network to inspect tracks and overhead wires.

A FAIRER SOCIAL HOUSING SYSTEM

- Minister for Family and Community Services Pru Goward has announced high value public housing property assets on the Sydney Harbour foreshore will be sold with the proceeds to be reinvested into the social housing system across NSW.
- 293 properties in Millers Point, Gloucester Street and the Sirius building in The Rocks will be sold, due to the high cost of maintenance, significant investment required to improve properties to an acceptable standard, and high potential sale values.
- The community expects us to invest in a sustainable social housing system which supports disadvantaged people across the whole state. Our ability to do that is severely limited if we sink millions of dollars into a small number of properties.
- We recognise some tenants have lived in public housing at these locations for decades, and moving may be difficult. This decision was not taken lightly, but it is the right decision in the interest of a sustainable, fair social housing system which currently has more than 57,000 families on the waiting list.

\$75 MILLION BOOST FOR REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- The NSW Government has committed more than \$75 million to regional infrastructure projects to support mining communities as part of the 2013-14 second and biggest-ever round of the *Resources for Regions* program.
- Funding has been allocated to 14 projects in the Cobar, Lithgow, Mid-Western, Muswellbrook, Narrabri, Newcastle and Singleton local government areas.
- *Resources for Regions* was introduced by the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government to remedy years of neglect under the Labor and ensure communities affected by mining activity receive their fair share of infrastructure funding.
- For more information visit, www.business.nsw.gov.au/assistance-and-support/grants/regional-programs/resources-for-regions.

NEW LEGISLATION TO TARGET MATCH FIXING IN SPORT

- The NSW Government has introduced legislation to Parliament to combat match fixing in sport, which will provide a framework for betting agencies to enter into integrity agreements with sports controlling bodies.
- Approved controlling bodies will now be given the power to choose the types of bets that are available for their sport.
- Australians expect the sports they watch or in which they participate to be played fairly and honestly and the NSW Government is committed to doing everything it can to ensure sport is free of the threat of match fixing and corruption.
- The legislation will support a national model that underpins the National Policy on Match Fixing in Sport, which was agreed to by all Sports Ministers in 2011.

COMMUNITY RIGHTS RESTORED FOR WIND FARMS

- The NSW Government has restored the community's appeal rights in the development application process for nine current wind farm projects lodged under the former Labor Government.
- The projects will now be considered as State Significant Developments instead of being dealt with under the Part 3A transitional provisions left over from Labor.
- The community can have confidence that their voices will be heard and that projects will be assessed and decisions made at arm's length from the Government.
- The nine proposals are the Yass, Rye Park, Paling Yards, Bango, Ungula, Crookwell, Liverpool Range, Rugby and Crudine Ridge wind farms.

BREAKFAST IS ON AT CONNECTED COMMUNITIES SCHOOLS

- Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli has announced a \$100,000 investment in breakfast programs at the 15 Connected Communities schools across NSW.
- Offering breakfast to students is an important element of the NSW Government's Connected Communities strategy, designed to improve educational outcomes in Aboriginal communities.
- Health research tells us that breakfast is vital for a student's concentration. This breakfast program ensures students are ready to make the most of their day.
- Connected Communities is a unique approach that gives schools unprecedented authority to tailor education to students' needs. The strategy recognises that one size does not fit all and we have given schools the power to do things differently.

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