

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 22 APRIL 2016

WESTCONNEX NEW M5 APPROVED

- The NSW Government has announced the approval of the WestConnex New M5 project which will relieve congestion and improve travel times for motorists.
- In response to issues raised by the community a series of conditions have been set to provide new open public space, new cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and strict environmental protections.
- The project's strict conditions of approval require there to be a net increase in trees as a result of works – a detailed assessment report of trees affected by the construction must be prepared by RMS.
- For more information please visit www.planning.nsw.gov.au/westconnex

NSW BUSINESS CONDITIONS AND PROSPECTS POSITIVE

- The Deloitte Access Economics Business Outlook has highlighted the strengths of the NSW economy and confirmed that NSW is the number one State in which to do business.
- The report noted NSW's outperformance on indicators such as housing construction, jobs, population growth and tourism with low interest rates and exchange rates particularly playing to NSW's strengths.
- The report predicted that the construction sector in NSW will continue to outperform the other states and that NSW has great jobs growth with a widening gap between NSW's unemployment rate and Australia's.

REGIONAL NSW CREATING HALF THE STATE'S JOBS

- The latest ABS data shows that Regional NSW is a bigger jobs creator than the whole of Queensland.
- The official figures show that 59,700 jobs were added in the regions in the year to March, an increase of 5% - this number accounts for about half the number of jobs added in NSW and is greater than the number of jobs added in Queensland.
- The NSW Government continues to invest for the long term, supporting regional businesses, communities and investing in infrastructure.

EFFECTIVE POLICING IN NSW PUSHES DOWN CRIME

- The latest quarterly report from the Bureau of Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) reflects the outstanding work of the NSW Police Force and the cooperation of the community.
- In the 24 months to December 2015, only one of the 17 major offence categories showed a significant trend (steal from retail store which is up 6.7%) while seven offences were trending down:
 - Robbery without a weapon – down 19.3%
 - Robbery with a firearm – down 41.8%
 - Robbery with a weapon not a firearm – down 20.7%
 - Break and enter dwelling – down 7.1%
 - Break and enter non-dwelling – down 7.1%
 - Motor vehicle theft – down 5.5%
 - Steal from motor vehicle – down 6.6%
- BOCSAR has identified increases in prohibited drug possession, including a 30.6% increase in amphetamine possession and a 35.9% increase in cocaine possession – these figures emphasise the importance of the NSW Government's targeted plan to stamp out drugs and support affected communities.
- The NSW Government remains committed to supporting the NSW Police Force to protect the community and these statistics showcase their efforts are being rewarded.

FUTURE TRANSPORT: OPAL APP UPDATED FOR CUSTOMER TOP UPS

- Opal customers will be able to top up on the go thanks to the new and improved Opal Travel app version 2.0.
- The new app will enable customers to:
 - Set their Opal card to auto top up and never queue or manually top up again;
 - Top up through the app and within 60 minutes collect the value at the next tap on;
 - Find the nearest Opal retailer;
 - Plan the quickest and most convenient trip and estimate what the fare will be; and
 - Check additional Opal cards linked to a single profile.

COUNCILLORS WANT TO STAY AFTER MERGERS

- More than 500 serving councillors have expressed an interest in roles with new councils.
- Mayors and councillors from councils subject to a merger proposal were invited to express their interest in a variety of roles, including potentially being an administrator and continuing to serve as a councillor.
- Delegates' reports are still being finalised before the Boundaries Commission considers them.
- No decisions about mergers have been made and the Government is aiming to make decisions by mid-year.

NSW TO EXPAND SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTMENT PROGRAM

- The NSW Government has released the 2016 Statement of Opportunities which outlines the Government's priority policy areas that have strong potential for social impact investment – continuing the momentum from the Government's first two social benefit bonds.
- The three key policy areas are:
 - Establishing an Aboriginal Centre for Excellence in Western Sydney;
 - Increasing access to early childhood education; and

- Increasing permanency for children in out-of-home care, particularly through open adoption.
- A series of market sounding events will be held in the coming months for interested parties to get more information on the Government's priority policy areas outlined in the Statement.
- Feedback from these market soundings will inform how Government proceeds with formal requests for social impact investment proposals that will be announced later this year.

FUTURE TRANSPORT: TRUCKS WILL 'TALK' TO TRAFFIC LIGHTS TO TACKLE CONGESTION

- The NSW Government will trial congestion by using connected technology to reduce the number of times trucks stop at traffic lights, potentially improving travel times at more than 100 intersections across Sydney.
- The trial will detect a heavy vehicle approaching traffic lights and provide more 'green' time and prevent stopping and starting of trucks which causes delays for all road users.
- With congestion costing Sydney about \$5 billion each year, the NSW Government is tackling this issue with immediate measures while work on major road projects such as WestConnex and NorthConnex continues.

ARIAL SHARK SURVEILLANCE TO BE CONDUCTED YEAR-ROUND

- The NSW Government will deliver aerial shark surveillance along the NSW coast will be conducted year-round for the next 12 months as part of the NSW Government's \$16 million Shark Management Strategy.
- Aerial surveillance will take place on selected weekdays, weekends, school holidays and public holidays over the next 12 months until April 2014.
- Aerial surveillance is just one component of the NSW Government's \$16 million Shark Management Strategy.

CONSULTATION PERIOD EXTENDED ON ENHANCING MARINE MANAGEMENT

- The NSW Government is giving users of the marine estate between Newcastle and Wollongong an additional two weeks to have their say on eight

suggested initiatives to enhance marine biodiversity conservation along the coast and in estuaries.

- Already twenty meetings have been held with advisory councils and stakeholder groups who use or manage the marine estate including the Port Authority of NSW, Aboriginal community members, commercial and recreational fishers, conservation groups and boating interest groups.
- Submissions close on Sunday 8 May and can be made at www.marine.nsw.gov.au.