

## **NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 30 OCTOBER 2015**

### **WORLD FIRST TRIAL AND NEW RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR CANNABIS BASED MEDICINES IN CHILDREN WITH EPILEPSY**

- NSW Premier Mike Baird and Minister for Medical Research Pru Goward have announced that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed with GW Pharmaceuticals (GW) to progress a major new research program for cannabis based medicines in children with severe, drug resistant childhood epilepsy.
- The MOU comes as part of the NSW Government's \$21 million commitment to support medicinal cannabis reforms.
- The Memorandum of Understanding will facilitate:
  - A world first, phase 2 clinical trial in children for GW's novel product containing the cannabinoid cannibidivarin;
  - A compassionate access scheme for Epidiolex, GW's product containing cannabidiol which is currently in late stage trials in childhood epilepsy in the United States;
  - Provision for NSW to host additional phase 3 clinical trials of Epidiolex in children with treatment-resistant epilepsy; and
  - A phase 4 clinical trial of Epidiolex based on phase 3 studies.
- The NSW Government is committed to new initiatives that will ensure that our most vulnerable children will have access to these innovative and advanced drugs, which will bring relief to them and their loved ones.

## **NEW STRATA REFORMS**

- The NSW Government has passed new strata laws to provide owners and tenants with greater flexibility in everyday living.
- These reforms were developed over four years in close consultation with key stakeholders and will make a difference to the lives of the owners and residents of the 75,000 strata schemes in NSW.
- Key changes include:
  - Lifting standards and accountability of strata managing agents and building managers;
  - Providing clearer, common-sense approvals for owner renovations and waiving restrictions for minor, cosmetic changes to lots;
  - Curbing proxy farming to ensure all owners get a fair say; and
  - Introducing mandatory defect inspection reports and a building bond when new strata buildings are constructed.
- The changes will be supported by a Strata Renewal Advice and Advocacy Program which provides free advice for owners and residents and additional support, advice and advocacy for vulnerable residents.

## **NSW NUMBER ONE AGAIN IN COMMSEC STATE OF THE STATES REPORT**

- Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian has welcomed the results of the CommSec's State of the State report which confirms NSW as the nation's strongest economy and ensures we retain our spot for a fifth consecutive quarter.
- The report focuses on key economic indicators such as retail spending and housing construction and notes that NSW is the premier economic state and has solid momentum.
- NSW has remained in first place for dwelling starts, retail trade and population growth and since the last quarter has moved up two spots in the list to first place for housing finance.
- The NSW Government is committed to making NSW an even better place to live, work and do business.

## **NSW GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS ILLAWARRA STEELWORKERS**

- The NSW Government is supporting the local steel industry and its workers by implementing measures to help BlueScope Steel secure its Port Kembla operations.
- NSW Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian has announced the targeted assistance package provides a structured deferral of payroll tax of up to \$60 million over three years to BlueScope.
- Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy Anthony Roberts said the NSW Government will work with the Commonwealth and other stakeholders to support the workers affected by BlueScope's restructure while continuing to drive jobs growth across the region.
- The NSW Government is committed to playing a strong role in securing the future of the Illawarra and workers in the region.

## **OPENING THE DOOR TO OPEN ADOPTION**

- Premier Mike Baird has announced that the NSW Government is committed to making adoption in NSW faster and easier.
- There are almost 20,000 children and young people in and out of home care across NSW.
- The NSW Government has established Australia's first government-supported 'Institute of Open Adoption' which is expected to launch in early 2016 and will lead the development of evidence based best practice.
- Open Adoption, where contact is maintained with the birth family, in the right circumstances can be a way of providing a child with a safe and stable home for life.

## **NEW LAWS TARGET ILLEGAL GUN TRADE**

- Deputy Premier and Minister for Police and Justice Troy Grant has introduced the *Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill 2015* – delivering on the NSW Government's commitment to strengthen the state's gun laws.

- The Bill:
  - Creates a new offence for the possession of a stolen firearm which will carry a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment;
  - Increases the maximum penalty for defacing or altering any identifying mark on a firearm or for possessing a defaced firearm from five years to 14 years' imprisonment;
  - Applies consistent maximum penalties of 14 years' imprisonment to a range of other offences relating to unauthorised possession, use, supply or acquisition of firearms; and
  - Includes a ban on the possession of digital blueprints that enable firearms to be manufactured using 3D printers and milling machines for anyone without an appropriate licence.
  
- The NSW Government will also create an Illegal Firearms Investigation and Reward Scheme which will offer rewards of up to \$10,000 for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of a person for possession of an illegal firearm.

## **MORE TRAINING CHOICES FOR APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES**

- The NSW Government is investing up to \$100 million to increase training options for employers which will support over 47,000 training places for apprentices and trainees.
  
- The additional training options are in the areas where there is strong demand, including western and south-western Sydney where there is a skills shortage.
  
- The NSW Government is also investing \$10 million to give students who have left school fee-free pre-traineeship and pre-apprenticeship courses – a 'try before you buy' model to provide students with the opportunity to start an apprenticeship or traineeship.
  
- Minister for Skills John Barilaro said the NSW Government is committed to driving skills training across the state to help lift apprenticeship completion rates to 65% by 2019.

## **\$19 MILLION TO ENRICH NSW ARTS & CULTURE**

- The NSW Government will provide almost \$19 million for more than 160 arts and cultural organisations to deliver innovative and high quality programs and projects.
- The funding, which is part of the Arts and Cultural Development Program, will cater for audiences across the state, support activities for 30,000 artists and employ more than 3,300 people.
- Funded projects include Flipside Youth Dance in Newcastle, Australian Theatre for Young People and Western Sydney's Urban Theatre Projects and regional galleries and museums.
- The NSW Government is delivering a diverse range of initiatives to boost our state's dynamic creative industries and further position NSW as the leading state for arts and culture.

## **WORLD FIRST SHARK NET STRATEGY**

- An increase in aerial shark surveillance and trials of new technologies will form part of the NSW Government's five year \$16 million shark strategy.
- Minister for Primary Industries Niall Blair said NSW is the first jurisdiction anywhere in the world to adopt an integrated approach toward keeping our beaches safe which includes:
  - \$7.7 million for trials of new technologies and aerial and coastal surveillance;
  - \$7 million for additional research into how to keep our beaches safe from sharks in their natural environment and the expansion of the shark tagging program currently underway on the NSW North Coast; and
  - \$1.3 million for educational programs in the community and to build the popular SharkSmart mobile app.
- The NSW Government will also invest in 20, 4G listening stations with data collected eventually made available to provide details of tagged shark locations via the SharkSmart app in real time.
- Through consultation with experts and the community, the NSW Government is delivering an integrated approach to detecting and deterring sharks that will keep our beaches safer for all.

## **SCHOOL OPAL CARD**

- The NSW Government will provide around 420,000 school students with a School Opal Card at the start of the 2016 school year so they can travel for free between home and school.
- The School Opal card will cover 3,130 Public, Catholic and Independent schools in the metropolitan and outer metropolitan areas.
- The initiative is part of the NSW Government's \$550 million program funding the 80 million school trips taken by students each year in NSW.
- The NSW Government is making it easier for families by helping students get to and from school safely.

## **MANAGING CROWN LAND: LEGISLATION TO BE INTRODUCED NEXT YEAR**

- NSW Minister for Lands and Water, Niall Blair, has released the NSW Government's response to the public submissions to the Crown Lands White Paper – a major milestone to better manage the state's Crown Land.
- 626 submissions were made in response to the White Paper and these will be the basis on which reforms will be made under the new Crown lands legislation.
- The NSW Government is determined to see local decisions made over local land and that Crown Lands are managed and protected for our local communities.
- This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make sure our local communities are making the decisions about how our local land – our showgrounds, racecourse, surf lifesaving clubs, community halls – is used and managed.