

## **NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 11 October 2013**

### **SUTHERLAND AND ST GEORGE HOSPITALS REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

- The NSW Government has announced \$1.2 million to plan for the future redevelopments of Sutherland and St George Hospitals.
- The funding of the planning process is an important first step towards delivering state-of-the-art hospitals for families of the Sutherland Shire and St George district.
- A major redevelopment of Sutherland Hospital would include up to 60 new inpatient beds and a refurbishment of the emergency department, while the major redevelopment of St George Hospital would accommodate an expansion of high priority clinical services such as intensive care, as well as new operating theatres. There would also be significant enhancement of inpatient wards.
- The NSW Government is delivering the new \$39 million St George Hospital emergency department, which is expected to be completed in the second half of next year.

### **SOUTH WEST RAIL LINK AHEAD OF SCHEDULE AND UNDER-BUDGET**

- The South West Rail Link is now one year ahead of schedule and under budget – proving the NSW Government is committed to improving infrastructure across the State.
- The project is now due to open in 2015 and it's expected the project will be completed at more than \$100 million below the \$2.1 billion budget.
- The NSW Government committed to delivering the South West Rail Link, shortly after coming into office we put in place a dedicated project team to get on with the job.
- It took the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government to lay the first piece of track on the South West Rail Link and all 31km is now in place.

### **UNEMPLOYMENT DROPS – STILL SECOND LOWEST IN AUSTRALIA**

- NSW Treasurer Mike Baird has been encouraged by the drop in the NSW unemployment rate, which remains the second-lowest in nation.
- The latest ABS Labour Force figures released this week show the NSW unemployment rate fell from 5.9 per cent to 5.6 per cent.
- The NSW unemployment rate has been at or below the national average for 11 of the last 12 months.

- The NSW Government will continue to pursue policies that encourage jobs growth for the people of NSW, like the Jobs Action Plan, which rebates payroll tax and WorkCover reforms to reduce premiums on businesses.

## **ANOTHER 101 FLASHING LIGHTS FOR SCHOOLS ACROSS NSW**

- The record rollout of flashing lights across NSW continues with another 101 schools to have the lights installed by the start of the 2014 school year.
- The NSW Government is delivering on its commitment to improve the safety of our children around school communities, and is working to ensure every school in the State has a set of flashing lights by December 2015.
- About 60 per cent of the next round of installations will target schools in rural and regional parts of NSW.
- By the start of Term One next year, 1,255 school zones will have flashing lights, covering a total 1,364 schools.

## **REPORT GIVES OUR BEACHES TOP MARKS**

- There's great news for swimmers as we head into summer, with the 2012/2013 State of the Beaches Report grading 96 per cent of our ocean beaches as 'very good' or 'good'.
- Sydney's cleanest beaches are Palm Beach, Whale Beach and Avalon Beach to the north, Maroubra in the east, and Greenhills and Jibbon beaches in the south.
- This year, Malabar Beach was graded 'good' for the first time since Beachwatch records began, following a \$3 million stormwater diversion project jointly funded by Sydney Water, Randwick Council and the NSW Environmental Trust.
- The full 2012/13 State of the Beaches Report is available at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/beach/reportann.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/beach/reportann.htm)

## **FIRST MAJOR CONTRACT AWARDED FOR WESTCONNEX**

- The NSW Government is wasting no time moving ahead with WestConnex, awarding the first major tender for the project.
- A joint team from SMEC/RPS has been appointed to prepare an environmental impact assessment for the WestConnex M4 Widening stage.
- The NSW Government is working to get WestConnex underway as soon as possible for frustrated Sydney motorists - the awarding of the first major tender follows the approval of the WestConnex business case late last month and the lodgement of the M4 Widening planning application.
- The first large-scale industry briefing for all three stages of WestConnex will be held at the end of this month in further proof we are getting on with delivering Australia's biggest infrastructure project.

## **\$42M INVESTMENT IN RESOURCES FOR REGIONS PROJECTS**

- Six infrastructure projects in mining-affected communities have been awarded funding through the first round of the Resources for Regions Program in 2013-14.
- The program supports infrastructure projects in mining-affected communities experiencing pressures on their infrastructure and services as a result of mining activity.
- The successful projects include funding to replace a water treatment plant at Cobar, the redevelopment of Black Bridge at Lithgow, a CBD renewal project at Singleton, and road upgrades at Muswellbrook and Wollongong and the Mid-Western LGA.
- The NSW Government is now calling for expressions of interest for the second round of funding. For more information visit [www.business.nsw.gov.au/assistance-and-support/grants/regional-programs/resources-for-regions](http://www.business.nsw.gov.au/assistance-and-support/grants/regional-programs/resources-for-regions)

## **SIX MORE NEW LIGHT RAIL VEHICLES FOR SYDNEY**

- The NSW Government had extended an existing contract for the supply of six new light rail vehicles, adding to a previous order of six new and four leased vehicles.
- The \$19 million order means that over the next few years, the NSW Government will be able to retire the existing light rail fleet that has been in operation since the current service started.
- These new vehicles, due to start arriving in 2014, will provide a smooth, quiet, comfortable and air-conditioned customer journey on this important mode of public transport in Sydney.
- The new vehicles will be used on the current Inner West Light Rail line, and the 5.6 kilometre extension of the line from Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill, which will begin operating in early 2014.

## **AUSTRALIAN PLANTBANK OPENS IN WESTERN SYDNEY**

- The new Australian PlantBank has opened at the Australian Botanic Garden at Mount Annan - it will eventually conserve 100 per cent of the State's flora.
- The Australian PlantBank's ultimate goal is to collect, store and study viable seeds or live tissue specimens of all plant species in Australia.
- Australia is home to 14 per cent of threatened plant species globally and almost a quarter of that 14 per cent is in danger of becoming extinct.
- The Australian PlantBank can conserve plant material using cryo-storage techniques, which involve storing small sections of plant tissue long-term in liquid nitrogen.

## **SENIORS CHRISTMAS CONCERTS SET FOR WIDER AUDIENCE**

- For the first time the popular Seniors Christmas Concerts will be held in regional areas and in Western Sydney.
- In November and December the concerts will be staged at Nowra, Newcastle, Tamworth and Penrith.
- The NSW Government wants to ensure as many people as possible across the state can take attend these events, so two concerts will be held in each location.
- Further information is available on the NSW Seniors Week website [www.nswseniorsweek.com.au/events/gala\\_concerts](http://www.nswseniorsweek.com.au/events/gala_concerts) or by calling 1300 855 501.

## **ROTARY TO BRING THE WORLD TO SYDNEY**

- Sydney is gearing up to host Rotary International's 105th annual convention, which is expected to attract more than 18,000 delegates from more than 150 countries.
- Next year's event will inject an estimated \$60.5 million into the NSW economy, which is great news for local businesses and workers in the tourism and hospitality sectors.
- Sydney is the major events capital of the Asia Pacific and this event provides us with another fantastic opportunity to showcase our harbour city.
- NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell has encouraged all of the Rotary delegates attending next year's conference to take the opportunity to explore Sydney and regional NSW during their visit.

***Want to know what the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is up to this week? Follow NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell on Twitter @BarryOFarrell and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/barryofarrellmp>***