

## **NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 17 January 2014**

### **GETTING ON WITH THE JOB: PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE UNDERWAY**

- The NSW and Australian Governments are getting on with the job of upgrading the Pacific Highway, with major work starting on the \$780 million 22km upgrade from Nambucca Heads to Urunga.
- The project will build a straighter, four-lane divided highway with grade-separated interchanges that separate local traffic from highway movements.
- NSW Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner said to date 368km of the Pacific Highway between Hexham and the Queensland border have been upgraded to a four-lane divided road.
- Weather permitting, it is hoped the upgrade will be completed and open to traffic in 2016.

### **DROP IN NSW UNEMPLOYMENT**

- NSW has recorded the second lowest unemployment rate in the nation after a drop in the unemployment rate for December.
- The latest ABS Labour Force figures show the NSW unemployment rate fell to 5.8 per cent from 5.9 per cent in the previous month.
- The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government has helped to create over 80,100 jobs since coming to office – the second highest number of jobs created after Western Australia.
- While the economic outlook remains uncertain, the NSW Government will continue with its strategy of investing in the key drivers of the NSW economy – jobs, housing and infrastructure.

### **STRONGER FUTURE FOR SYDNEY'S BOTANIC GARDENS AND PARKLANDS**

- Environment Minister Robyn Parker has announced a plan to strengthen Sydney's favourite green spaces with operations of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain and Centennial Parklands to be amalgamated.
- This move will provide enormous community and visitor benefits as these amazing sites will have access to up to \$7 million more funding each, which will be re-invested in exciting and innovative projects.
- The operations of Centennial Parklands and Moore Park, the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, the Domain, The Australian Botanic Garden Mt Annan and the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mt Tomah, will be merged to create a harbour-side to mountain-top network of nearly 1,100 hectares.

## **NEW ARMIDALE COURT AMONG THE BEST IN REGIONAL NSW**

- Armidale is now home to one of the most advanced courthouses in regional NSW, with the new Armidale Courthouse officially opened by Attorney General Greg Smith SC and Member for Northern Tablelands Adam Marshall.
- The complex includes a trial court, a local court and a multipurpose room that can be used to conduct a callover court or to assemble jurors; the courthouse had been designed to reduce prisoner contact with the public.
- High definition audio visual link facilities will enable the court to hear bail applications made from jails and to receive testimony from witnesses in locations across Australia and all over the world, while victims of sexual assault will be able to testify by closed circuit camera from a private and secure room within the courthouse.
- The local court has an enclosed dock for prisoners and courthouse security will be bolstered by CCTV cameras, duress alarms and electronic access control of restricted areas.

## **HUNTER TO HOST FIRST 2014 COMMUNITY CABINET IN MAITLAND**

- The NSW Government will host the first Community Cabinet meeting of 2014 in the State's Hunter region in Maitland.
- The public forum will be held on Monday 10 February at Maitland Town Hall, giving residents a chance to have a say on issues that matter to them.
- Updates will be provided on the NSW Government's revitalisation of the Newcastle CBD, including light rail in the CBD, the Hunter Expressway, investments in the Singleton and Muswellbrook hospitals, and investments in water infrastructure.
- To register for the public forum, a registration form can be completed online at [www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/programs\\_and\\_services/community\\_cabinet\\_meetings](http://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/programs_and_services/community_cabinet_meetings) or phone the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet on 9228 5016.

## **BUMPER AUSTRALIA DAY PROGRAM**

- This Australia Day's program promises to be one of the best ever, with more than 14 hours of entertainment on and around Sydney Harbour on 26 January.
- In one of the biggest celebrations on the harbour since the Bicentenary, the Sydney Harbour Concert Series will feature live music performances on a floating stage at Blues Point, Athol Bay and Darling Harbour.
- While the Sydney Harbour concerts take centre stage on Australia Day, there is a full and diverse program of events occurring around NSW.
- Full details of the Australia Day 2014 program are available at [www.australiaday.com.au](http://www.australiaday.com.au)

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