PORT LEASE SECURES FUNDS FOR NEWCASTLE REVITALISATION

- NSW Premier Mike Baird and Treasurer Andrew Constance have announced the successful lease of the Port of Newcastle, delivering a great result for the people of NSW and securing the funds needed for the revitalisation of Newcastle.

- The NSW Government has agreed to lease the Port for 98 years to Port of Newcastle Investments, a consortium which comprises Hastings Funds Management and China Merchants.

- The lease will deliver gross proceeds of $1.75 billion. This outstanding result means an extra $1.5 billion will be invested in much-needed NSW infrastructure, with 30 per cent to be directed toward projects in rural and regional NSW.

- $340 million from the proceeds will be used for the revitalisation of the Newcastle CBD, in addition to the $120 million the Government has already allocated to the project, which includes a new light rail service. The remainder – more than $1.2 billion – will be invested in the NSW Government’s dedicated infrastructure fund, Restart NSW.

TRANSFORMING REGIONAL AND RURAL HEALTH

- NSW Premier Mike Baird made his first visit to regional NSW since becoming Premier, inspecting progress on the $282 million redevelopment of Wagga Wagga Base Hospital - the largest rural hospital upgrade in the state.

- Our commitment to regional and rural health cannot be clearer – the NSW Government is redeveloping hospitals across the state to ensure patients receive first-class care in first-class facilities.

- Hospital upgrades are pushing ahead in regional NSW at Tamworth ($220 million redevelopment), Port Macquarie ($110 million redevelopment), Dubbo ($91 million redevelopment), Lismore ($80 million redevelopment), Kempsey ($80 million redevelopment), Parkes ($72 million development), Forbes ($40.9 million redevelopment) and Bega ($171 million development).

- While in Wagga Wagga Mr Baird, Health Minister Jillian Skinner, Mental Health Minister Jai Rowell and Wagga Wagga MP Daryl Maguire visited the hospital’s new mental health unit.

CORRIDOR PRESERVATION: SOUTH WEST RAIL LINK AIRPORT EXTENSION

- Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian has announced the NSW Government has started work to set aside a future corridor for a South West Rail Link extension to Sydney’s second airport, with community consultation set to begin this week.
This corridor planning means when the time comes to extend the South West Rail Link we will be ready to go, and costs will be lower.

One of the reasons the North West Rail Link costs what it does is that the corridor wasn’t preserved – we can’t allow that mistake to happen again for future transport projects.

The South West Rail Link is due to open in 2015 – one year ahead of schedule and $100 million below the $2.1 billion budget.

**NSW LEADING THE WAY IN HOSPITAL PERFORMANCE**

- Hospitals in NSW are leading other states and territories on national performance benchmarks according to the latest Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has released the *Australian Hospital Statistics 2012-2013*.

- The results show that in 2012-13, NSW public hospitals treated the largest number of patients of any state or territory, with 2.6 million emergency department presentations and 1.7 million hospital admissions.

- More than 70 per cent of NSW patients completed their emergency department treatment within the four hour National Emergency Access Target - up 9.7 per cent from the previous year, the greatest rise in the nation.

- Of all elective surgery patients, almost 97 per cent received their treatment within clinically recommended time frames - the best result in Australia.

- The NSW Government has congratulated the dedicated doctors, nurses and other clinical staff who are driving continuing improvement in NSW hospitals.

**STRONG INVESTMENT RETURNS DELIVER A BOOST TO WORKERS COMP SCHEME**

- NSW Treasurer Andrew Constance and Minister for Finance and Services Dominic Perrottet have today announced a $1 billion improvement to the bottom line of the NSW Workers Compensation Scheme – a result driven by excellent investment returns of $690 million.

- The scheme’s updated surplus of $1.36 billion gives the NSW Government flexibility around premium rate reductions for businesses and benefits for injured workers, subject to the findings of a statutory review and a Law and Justice Committee inquiry.

- We inherited an unsustainable Workers Compensation Scheme, with a rising $4 billion deficit. Businesses were facing a 28 per cent increase to their premiums and more than 12,000 jobs were at risk.

- The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government’s reforms were about putting the scheme back on a sustainable footing and better supporting the state’s most seriously injured workers.

**NSW ON THE MOVE THROUGH NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION**

- NSW moved up two places in the latest CommSec State of the States report to be third among the states and territories overall.

- The report highlights more positive news for the NSW economy and is a strong endorsement of the actions taken by the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government.
According to CommSec, NSW ranked first in dwelling starts and improved its position on economic growth, equipment investment and construction work.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government has a clear focus on stimulating growth through housing and jobs and this report shows it’s paying dividends.

SCHOOL STUDENTS TO NAME NWRL TUNNEL BORING MACHINE

School students from Sydney’s North West will have the chance to name the first of the four tunnel boring machines on the $8.3 billion North West Rail Link.

With the first tunnel boring machine due in the ground at Bella Vista in October this year, the competition to name it has the theme: “Women who have made a positive contribution to life in Sydney.”

The winners will attend and will be involved in the official launch of the machine as it starts digging the first of the twin 15km tunnels.

Competition entries close on May 25. For details visit www.northwestrail.com.au

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