

## NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 25 October 2013

### HELPING EVERYONE AFFECTED BY BUSH FIRE

- Disaster assistance is available to help anyone needing emergency food, clothing and accommodation, small businesses and farmers needing concessional loans, and local and state government authorities needing financial assistance to help restore damaged infrastructure.
- Disaster assistance is available through the NSW Disaster Assistance Arrangements and is jointly funded with the Commonwealth. More information can be found by visiting [www.mpes.nsw.gov.au/nddassistance](http://www.mpes.nsw.gov.au/nddassistance) and [www.disasterassist.gov.au](http://www.disasterassist.gov.au)
- To help with the clean-up the NSW Government has suspended its waste levy on all waste generated as a result of the bush fires, including bulk waste and asbestos.
- The NSW Government will replace a driver licence and vehicle registration papers free-of-charge if they were destroyed in the fires.
- There will be no charge to replace birth, marriage and change-of-name certificates, or an RMS E-Toll tag.
- Following representations from local MPs Sydney Water and Hunter Water will waive excess water charges for residents who defended their homes during the bush fires.
- Legal protections are in place to make sure RFS and SES volunteers who gave up their time to respond to the bushfires aren't penalised by their employers.
- Workers compensation insurance payments will be delayed until 30 June 2014 to help businesses reopen as soon as possible.
- Anyone with questions should call Service NSW 24/7 on 13 77 88.

### A NEW ERA IN PLANNING – LOCAL PLANNING FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- The NSW Government has delivered on its promise to return planning power to the local community and will implement a new system that delivers transparency and certainty.
- The legislation will mean that for the first time NSW has a planning system that puts the community first, is easy to use, efficient, transparent and where everyone knows what the rules are, upfront.
- The new planning system will ensure everyone gets a say; provide certainty in the planning process and allow local planning for local communities.

- It will put environmental and social considerations on the same level as economic growth when assessing development, maintain all existing legal rights and expand judicial review rights, and enhance checks and balances, with the Minister, councils and other decision makers having to consider community input in all their decisions, and then publish their reasons and say how they have addressed community concerns.

## **SCHOOL SPENDING GETS SMARTER**

- Some \$300 million in needs-based funding has been announced for NSW public schools in 2014 – the first year of the so-called Gonski school funding reforms.
- For the first time, funding provided to schools will directly reflect the characteristics of individual schools and its students.
- More than 90 per cent of all public schools will receive more funding on two new equity loadings, and more than 1,440 schools will receive more than a 100 per cent increase when compared with current funding levels.
- The socio-economic equity loading will fund more than 390,000 students from low SES backgrounds across NSW - more than three times the students supported now.
- Details of the funding allocated for each school can be found by visiting, <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/local-schools-local-decisions/reform-agenda/resource-allocation-model>

## **FUNDING BOOST FOR PRESCHOOL SECTOR**

- Around 95 per cent of all community preschools will see an increase in their base funding rate under the big reforms to the NSW community preschool sector.
- Funding will be increased by 20 per cent to \$150 million, with the highest base funding rate to increase from \$2,950 to \$5,270 per child.
- The funding will provide increased base subsidies for children aged four and five in their year before school, and three year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds including children from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.
- The NSW Government wants to ensure all children in NSW have access to preschool programs in their year before school.

## **NEW TIMETABLES INTRODUCED DELIVERING 2,700 EXTRA SERVICES**

- A new era of public transport has begun with the introduction of more than 2,700 additional weekly services under the state's first ever integrated transport timetable.
- It has delivered more than 1,000 extra train services a week, 1,700 extra bus services and 55 extra ferry services – it's the extra frequency and capacity customers have been crying out for.
- The new timetable will deliver more services, new express services, and shorter travel times for many customers travelling longer distances.
- Customers can plan their journeys online at <http://131500.com.au> , or by downloading the New Times app, or phoning the Transport Info Line on 131 500.

## **NSW AAA CREDIT RATING CONFIRMED**

- NSW is one of only two states to retain a triple-A credit rating, with Standard & Poor's affirming our rating this week.
- NSW Treasurer Mike Baird welcomed the announcement but cautioned that the unchanged negative outlook was a reminder of the ongoing economic challenges facing the NSW Government.
- Maintaining our triple-A credit rating has been a huge challenge in the face of massive downgrade in revenues across the country and the significant infrastructure backlog the NSW Government inherited.
- The announcement is another vote of confidence that the NSW Government is making the right decisions to restore strength to our finances and capacity to our balance sheet, while at the same time investing in better infrastructure and services.

## **HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT**

- Construction has begun with the first sod being turned for the \$120 million Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital redevelopment.
- The centre piece of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital redevelopment is the new STAR Building, which will provide a new home for Surgical, Theatres, Anaesthetic and Recovery (STAR) services.
- The four-storey building will include eight operating theatres, three 28-bed inpatient surgical wards, a sterilising department and new kitchens.
- The project is another example of the NSW Government's commitment to overcoming Labor's legacy of 16 years of neglect of hospital infrastructure.

## **GETTING ON WITH THE JOB: SYDNEY AND HUNTER LIGHT RAIL**

- The work on the CBD-South East Sydney and Newcastle light rail projects continues apace.
- Representatives from 66 organisations attended an industry briefing on the project as expressions of interest remain open on the best way to deliver the project.
- Meanwhile in the Hunter, the NSW Government is preparing a business case and economic appraisal for the Newcastle Light Rail project.
- Newcastle is the second largest city in NSW and its revitalisation is a priority for this Government.

## **WIN-WIN FOR CONSUMERS AND MOTOR INDUSTRY**

- New laws have been introduced into Parliament to provide greater protection for consumers while supporting businesses in the motor industry.
- These simplified laws remove duplication and out-dated terms, while providing a fair go for everyone in the motor industry by cutting red tape.

- In 2012-2013 more than 380,000 new vehicles and more than 1.4 million used vehicles were sold, worth more than \$30 billion in total.
- Consumer protections will be strengthened by increasing penalties for odometer tampering, and Fair Trading inspectors will be given additional powers.

### **MAKING FALSE ALLEGATIONS FOR APVOs BECOMES A CRIME**

- Making false allegations in order to obtain a personal violence order against a neighbour, co-worker, or stranger will become a criminal offence.
- The move is designed to protect law-abiding citizens from false and vexatious APVO applications.
- Under this law it will be an offence punishable with a fine of up to \$1100, or up to 12 months in prison.
- The changes follow recommendations made by a review of frivolous and vexatious apprehended personal violence orders, which was tabled in parliament last month.

### **COUNTRY RAIL NETWORK TO BENEFIT FROM MAINTENANCE BOOST**

- Regional rail customers will benefit from six new railway track maintenance machines to improve maintenance across the Country Rail Network.
- The six new railway track maintenance machines were commissioned this week and will be used to resurface and regulate tracks more efficiently and improve the quality, durability and reliability of the Country Rail Network.
- This machinery can move more quickly between worksites and is estimated to deliver significantly higher tamping output, the rate that track is positioned and the stone ballast is squeezed around the sleepers.
- The NSW Government understands the importance of the Country Rail Network for residents in rural and regional parts of the State.

### **IT'S ON: STAY IN NSW THIS SUMMER**

- Sydney and regional NSW's best tourism experiences, attractions and events will be showcased this summer through major campaigns, including a new interactive digital magazine for iPad with video content and simple 'click to book' event tickets directly online.
- The campaigns will appear across print, outdoor and digital media, including the 40-page, full colour magazine called *Love Every Second in Sydney and NSW*, inserted into 1.9 million newspapers across Australia and New Zealand.
- In a NSW Government first, the *Love Every Second in Sydney and NSW* magazine is also available in a digital format that can be downloaded from the Apple Newsstand, allowing visitors from around the world to interact with the campaign from their iPad.

**Want to know what the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is up to this week?  
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