

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 5 December 2014

NSW ECONOMY CARRYING THE NATION

- The importance of a strong NSW economy to the nation has been confirmed in the latest ABS National Accounts figures.
- NSW State Final Demand grew 1.3 per cent in the September quarter and 4.7 per cent through the year – the highest of all the states.
- While NSW is powering ahead, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia all went backwards.
- The NSW Government's decision to invest in key drivers of the economy is paying off as shown by increases in household consumption (up 0.9 per cent), new machinery and equipment investment (up 13.5 per cent), new non-residential building construction (up 6.5 per cent) and dwelling investment (up 2.9 per cent).

OPAL ROLLOUT COMPLETE

- The Opal rollout is now complete on all trains, all buses, all Sydney Ferries and all light rail services – months ahead of schedule.
- More than 1.3 million Opal cards have been issued, making public transport travel more attractive and convenient than ever before.
- With Opal now available on all modes of transport in Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Hunter and the Illawarra, customers can travel anywhere on suburban and intercity trains, buses, ferries and light rail with just one card.
- The successful rollout to 308 train stations, 5,000 buses, 40 wharves and 23 light rail stops means the NSW Liberals & Nationals have delivered in our first term what Labor couldn't do in 16 years.

BEST CRIME STATS ON RECORD FOR NSW

- Minister for Police and Emergency Services Stuart Ayres has welcomed a new report showing the best crime statistics on record for NSW, with all major crime categories having fallen or remained stable across the state.
- The latest Bureau of Crime Statistics report shows 10 of the 17 major offence categories have fallen with seven remaining stable in the 24 months to September 2014.
- Away from the major crime categories, there was a 26 per cent increase in charges over amphetamine possession due to proactive policing. NSW also recorded a 17 per cent downward trend in non-fatal shootings.
- The NSW Government will continue working with police to ensure they have the powers and resources they need to keep our communities safe. NSW Police Force numbers are now at an all-time record with authorised strength at 16,396.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL IMPROVEMENTS

- Improvements to the CBD and South East Light Rail project have been unveiled that will result in better services with increased capacity and improved traffic flow at key intersections.
- Longer vehicles will have the potential to ultimately carry 50 per cent more passengers in each direction than previously planned.
- Another important improvement is to use modern light rail technology that will remove the need for overhead wire in a large part of George Street, reducing the visual impact of light rail in this busy part of the CBD.
- The proposed modifications are on public exhibition and can be viewed at www.planning.nsw.gov.au or www.sydneylightrail.com.au

NSW BACKS INDIGENOUS CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION

- The NSW Government has offered in-principle support for a federal referendum to recognise Indigenous Australians in the nation's Constitution.
- As a result, NSW has become the first state or territory to support the national campaign for Constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians.
- NSW Premier Mike Baird said the state was home to about a third of the national Indigenous population and had a responsibility to lead the national debate.
- Mr Baird said the campaign provided a unique opportunity to acknowledge the nation's first people in Australia's founding document.

REVITALISING NEWCASTLE: THE PEOPLE'S PROJECT

- NSW Premier Mike Baird has announced the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government remains fully committed to the revitalisation of Newcastle and that as part of the process Newcastle City Council will play a lead role in determining any future land use on the former rail corridor.
- The NSW Government is revitalising Newcastle and delivering a new modern light rail network through the CBD – a job that starts with truncating the rail line and reconnecting Newcastle's city centre with the foreshore after years of inaction.
- We have always said we would involve the community in any decisions regarding the future of the rail corridor in Newcastle and we are now delivering on that commitment.
- This is the people's project and it means Newcastle Council will have the final say about what development occurs on the former rail corridor and it must tick off on any proposal before it proceeds.

COMMON SENSE REFORM FOR BOATIES

- Almost half a million boating enthusiasts can now benefit from a new combined car and boat licence.
- The common sense reform means a drivers licence holder who also has a boat or personal watercraft licence can have the two combined on one card with one expiry date, reducing the amount of paperwork they need to complete.
- Minister for Roads and Freight Duncan Gay said he is also working to fix boaties' licence frustrations by improving the NSW boat licence system to make it simpler, cheaper and more accessible.
- Improvements up for discussion include introducing an online licensing test and a 10 year boat license - a discussion paper can be viewed at <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/mmc/review-nsw-boat-driver-licensing>

NEW LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN PROTECTIONS AND INCLUSION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

- New legislation now in force will protect people with disability during and following transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and enshrine their rights and inclusion within the community.
- The new legislation is an important milestone for people with disability, their families and carers - for whom the Act was written.
- Under the new Act, state and local governments will work together to ensure that each and every person with disability can take part in community life and easily access services and facilities that the rest of us take for granted.
- The Act will play a vital role as we transition to the NDIS protecting the rights of people with disability and strengthening safeguards.

NEW POLICE HELICOPTER AND AIRCRAFT

- Two new state-of-the-art aircraft have been welcomed to the NSW Police Aviation Support Branch.
- The new PolAir 5 helicopter along with the new fixed wing aircraft PolAir 7 will assist police with their day-to-day duties as well as specific operations.
- With a cruise speed limit of over 200km/h and a range of over 600kms, PolAir 5 features a digital glass touch screen cockpit that assists with navigation and flying efficiency. It has an advanced “auto hover” autopilot that increases safety when conducting winch rescues – especially near cliffs and over water.
- PolAir 7, the Cessna Grand Caravan EX, is a turbo prop single engine fixed wing aircraft. It has a cruise speed limit of over 340km/h and a range of over 1,400kms and can be used to transport specialist equipment, cargo and passengers.

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY SAFE: INVESTING IN FIRE STATIONS

- The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is investing in fire stations to ensure our firefighters have the best possible equipment and facilities.
- This week Minister for Police and Emergency Services Stuart Ayres celebrated the opening of the new \$1.9m fire station at Salamander Bay, the completion of a major \$2.4 million upgrade of Cardiff Fire Station and the completion of the new \$2.3 million Picton Fire Station.
- The new and improved fire stations help our firefighters protect their surrounding communities from fires, accidents, chemical spills and other emergencies.
- The opening of the new facilities follows the announcement last week of 40 new firefighter positions and five new fire trucks in the greater Sydney area.

NEW \$5 MILLION AMBULANCE STATION FOR BERRY

- The community of Berry will benefit from \$5 million that has been committed for a new ambulance station to assist paramedics caring for the local community.
- A location for the new station is currently being sought and the scope of the project is being planned.
- The NSW Government committed funding in this year’s budget to plan for new and refurbished ambulance stations and Berry forms part of this commitment.
- The new ambulance station will have many benefits, including improved ambulance response times for Berry, Shoalhaven Heads and surrounding areas. The NSW

Liberals & Nationals Government has boosted paramedic workforce with an additional 205 paramedics joining NSW Ambulance since June 2011.

GALLIPOLI SCHOOL TOUR STUDENTS ANNOUNCED

- High school students selected to represent NSW at Centenary of Anzac commemorations at Gallipoli in April 2015 have been announced.
- The NSW Government is investing \$1 million to enable 100 students to participate in a nine-day tour visiting historical sites and First World War battlefields in Turkey, and attending the Anzac Day Dawn Service at Gallipoli.
- Among the 100 students, aged 15 to 18, and 28 supervising teachers travelling to Gallipoli there are some amazing family connections to the Anzac story.
- Over 220 students were chosen by local selection panels which included local RSL NSW Sub-Branch representatives, the local state MP as well as school and community members chosen by the principal.
- The tour group will depart Sydney on 19 April and return on 27 April 2015.

DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR SUNRAYSIA PRODUCERS

- Primary producers in parts of the Wentworth Local Government Area affected by a severe wind and hail storm on 22 November 2014 will now have access to Agricultural Natural Disaster Relief Assistance.
- The severe storm event caused more than \$12 million damage in parts of the Sunraysia area, and affected at least 100 rural properties.
- The Parishes of Neilpo, Tiltao, Dean, Wentworth, Mourquong, Gol Gol, Cliffs, Paringi, Thitto and North Cowl within the County of Wentworth have been declared agricultural natural disaster areas to help affected farmers repair their properties and restore their businesses.
- Affected producers are urged to apply for assistance via the NSW Rural Assistance Authority by calling 1800 678 593 or visiting www.raa.nsw.gov.au

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