

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 5 September 2014

PREMIER PROMOTES TAFE, TOURISM, FINANCIAL SERVICES ON CHINA VISIT

- On his first official overseas visit as Premier, Mike Baird this week visited Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing.
- In Shanghai, Mr Baird announced a Chinese tourism delegation will visit the Vivid Sydney Festival next year as part of the NSW Government's plan to double the value of Chinese tourism to NSW by 2020.
- Mr Baird also briefed a financial services roundtable in Shanghai on a new initiative to promote Sydney as a trading hub for the Chinese currency.
- Mr Baird attended the signing in Guangzhou of two historic agreements between TAFE NSW and Chinese universities that secured a unique relationship between TAFE NSW and China.
- Also in Guangzhou, Mr Baird met Guangdong Governor Zhu Xiaodan, who will visit Sydney later this month.
- This year marks the 35th anniversary of the sister-state relationship between Guangdong and NSW.

ECONOMY CONTINUES TO SHOW HEALTHY GROWTH

- The National Accounts released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on Wednesday revealed the NSW economy remains the fastest-growing of all the states.
- The figures showed State Final Demand in NSW grew by 3.6 per cent during the last financial year.
- The annual result was driven by a strong result in the March quarter, which was revised up from 2.4 per cent to 2.7 per cent.
- The positive result came despite a 0.4 per cent drop in demand during the June quarter.

CONSTANCE HAILS STRONG RETAIL RESULT

- In further strong economic news, NSW has recorded a bumper month of retail trade in July, with \$7 billion going through the State's cash registers.
- Figures from the ABS showed retail trade increased 0.7 per cent during the month to be up 9.8 per cent for the year.
- The annual result is the highest of all the states.

- Treasurer Andrew Constance described the result as “incredibly strong” and said it demonstrated that consumer confidence is continuing to build in NSW.

NSW POLICE CONGRATULATED FOR CRIME STATISTICS

- The work of NSW Police is being commended with a new report showing major crime categories have fallen or remained stable across the State.
- According to the Bureau of Crime Statistics (BOCSAR), seven of the 17 major offence categories have fallen with 10 remaining stable in the 24 months to June 2014 - the first time none of the major crime offences increased in NSW.
- Police Minister Stuart Ayres says it's an outstanding result and has congratulated the NSW Police Force for its relentless efforts in preventing and investigating crime.
- The statistics show police are effectively using new powers we've given by them to get guns off the street and to tackle organised crime.

WESTCONNEX TAKES ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

- The Australian and NSW Governments are getting on with delivering the WestConnex motorway, calling for expressions of interest to build the M5 - King Georges Road Interchange upgrade.
- The M5 - King Georges Road Interchange Upgrade will create more than 100 new jobs during construction and increase capacity on the eastbound on-ramp and westbound off-ramp between King Georges Road and the M5 East.
- We are getting on with building both WestConnex Stages One and Two at the same time to ensure we create thousands of new jobs, grow the economy more quickly and bust congestion in our cities which is costing the economy billions.
- Also this week, the new design improvements for the 10 kilometre Bringelly Road upgrade have been released for community feedback – both governments have committed \$509 million to expand the road from a two-lane to a minimum four-lane divided road with a central median strip.

NEWCASTLE LIGHT RAIL

- Minister for Transport and Minister for the Hunter Gladys Berejiklian has announced that a combined team of Newcastle-based experts will prepare an environmental impact assessment for the Newcastle Light Rail project, as geotechnical works begin.
- The NSW Government is getting on with the job of delivering important infrastructure projects, and this is another important stage in the revitalisation of Newcastle.
- The environmental assessment studies will examine issues including heritage, visual and urban design, noise and vibration, social impacts, air quality and traffic, and access.
- Geotechnical works are also commencing along the light rail route to assess above and below ground conditions and identify services including electrical, telecommunications and stormwater.

HELPING COMMUNITIES BUILD RESILIENCE TO NATURAL DISASTERS

- Funding worth \$27 million has been announced to assist NSW communities build resilience to natural disasters.
- The State and Commonwealth government funding will go to a mix of small brigades and units in the State Emergency Services, NSW Rural Fire Service, Marine Rescue NSW, government agencies, and not-for-profit organisations including the Australian Red Cross and the Salvation Army.
- It will support a broad range of projects, particularly locally-based community engagement projects that will build partnerships between local emergency management agencies, community groups, and the not-for profit and private sectors to improve preparedness for all natural disasters.
- Projects will be announced locally over the coming months.

LATEST DATA REVEALS NSW TREATING MORE PATIENTS FASTER THAN EVER

- Health Minister Jillian Skinner has congratulated staff across the public health system following the release of data showing NSW hospitals are continuing their improvements in emergency department services and elective surgery.
- The latest Bureau of Health Information (BHI) Quarterly Report (April-June 2014) demonstrates NSW public hospitals are delivering quality care to patients faster than ever before.
- Demand for hospital services continues to grow and it is the innovation and inspired work being done on the frontline that is ensuring patients are receiving quality, timely health care.
- These results are testament to the hard work of doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and hospital staff and Mrs Skinner has thanked them for their dedication to caring for patients across the State.

COMMUNITY, OFFENDERS BENEFIT WITH \$17 MILLION SUPPORT PACKAGE

- The NSW Government has launched a new funding package that will result in five times as many offenders supported upon their release into the community.
- The \$17 million package over three years will see services expanded to those most at risk of falling off the straight and narrow – especially those with a history of mental health problems, drug and substance abuse.
- The first tranche of funding – \$11 million over three years – comes under the new Funded Partnership Initiative, which has been allocated to 14 non-government agencies for offender transition support, as well as support for offenders' families and victims of crime.
- Attorney General and Minister for Justice Brad Hazzard said the package will transform the way transition support is offered in NSW and support far more offenders.

WOMEN IN NSW 2014 REPORT

- Minister for Women Pru Goward has launched the third annual *Women in NSW 2014* report as part of the NSW Government's commitment to track gender equity across key aspects of women's lives.
- The *Women in NSW* reports make data available to the public and to the government, business and the community sectors for use in policy-making, decision-making and program design.
- The reports were introduced by the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government to monitor the status of NSW women and identify trouble spots as they emerge. It is the first and only report of its kind in Australia.
- The report can be viewed at www.women.nsw.gov.au

NSW THE NUMBER ONE DESTINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL YOUTH VISITORS

- NSW received more than one million international youth visitors in the year ending June 2014 - the only Australian state to achieve the milestone.
- The latest International Visitor Survey reveals that NSW also continued to receive the greatest share of visitor numbers, nights and expenditure.
- The figures confirm NSW's position as the number one state in Australia to visit.
- We have set an ambitious target of doubling overnight visitor expenditure in NSW by 2020, and we are determined to meet that goal.

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