

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 8 November 2013

GREEN TAPE TO BE SLASHED UNDER AGREEMENT WITH FEDERAL GOVT

- Prime Minister Tony Abbott and NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell have signed an agreement to create a one-stop shop for environmental approvals which will slash so-called green tape.
- The one-stop shop will eliminate unnecessary duplication, free up jobs and investment, while providing stringent protection for the environment.
- The duplication of approval processes can hold up projects, like the urgent Pacific Highway upgrade.
- This agreement shows the benefits having governments in Sydney and Canberra that care about jobs and investment, while providing the proper environmental safeguards.

PLANNING UNDERWAY FOR WESTMEAD HOSPITAL UPGRADE

- The NSW Government has announced planning is underway for the first stage of a major redevelopment at Westmead Hospital, in further action on our commitment to provide first class hospitals.
- It is expected the planned first stage of the Westmead redevelopment would co-locate all complex and critical care services into a multi-storey comprehensive care centre, to improve the treatment of critically ill emergency patients, trauma and surgical patients.
- The planned centre would include up to 12 state-of-the-art operating theatres, extra inpatient beds and a further expansion of the emergency department.
- The Westmead Hospital redevelopment would add to current hospital infrastructure projects underway in Western Sydney, including the \$324 million upgrade to Blacktown Mt Druitt Hospital, the \$139 million redevelopment of Campbelltown Hospital, and the completion of the \$139 million expansion of Nepean Hospital.

BACKING THE BLUE MOUNTAINS: POST-BUSH FIRE TOURISM BOOST

- The NSW Government is backing the Blue Mountains recovery effort with a marketing and promotion campaign to encourage tourists to visit the region.
- The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is contributing \$227,500 to market and promote the Blue Mountains region to domestic and international tourists.

- Now the immediate bush fire threat has passed, one of the most important things we can do to support the Blue Mountains is to go and visit the region.
- Motels and B&Bs have been reporting cancellations and businesses are suffering, so NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell has delivered the message that the Blue Mountains is 'open for business'.

\$80 MILLION BOOST FOR RURAL AND REMOTE SCHOOLS

- Rural and remote public schools across the State will receive \$80 million over four years to improve student learning outcomes as part of the *Rural and Remote Education Blueprint for Action*.
- Over \$30 million will be allocated over four years for new incentives to attract quality teachers and school leaders to rural and remote areas.
- Principals at remote schools will have the power to employ high performing temporary teachers and staff; \$10,000 recruitment incentives, and rental subsidies.
- Funding for the *Blueprint* is in addition to the \$35 million in capital works recently directed to the 15 *Connected Communities* schools in rural NSW.
- More information about the *Blueprint* is available at <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/rural-and-remote-education>

WASTE LEVY TRIAL TO TACKLE ASBESTOS

- The NSW Government has committed \$3 million to trial a Householders' Asbestos Disposal Scheme that will waive the waste levy on asbestos and reduce tip fees in participating council areas.
- The 12 month trial will remove the waste levy on asbestos in selected areas, while the EPA will contribute \$50 per tonne towards the costs of removing and transporting wrapped bonded asbestos that is disposed of as part of the scheme.
- Asbestos disposal is an increasing community concern as more home renovators undertake works on homes built before 1987.
- This trial will pilot innovative approaches to increase the lawful disposal of asbestos and discourage illegal operators by reducing the financial advantage.

WESTERN SYDNEY PARKLANDS ON TRACK TO CREATE 8,800 JOBS

- The Western Sydney Parklands is on track to create 8,800 jobs by 2030, providing a \$2.2 billion economic injection.
- The jobs will be created by proposed business hubs and the Wet 'n' Wild theme park.
- When complete, the Western Sydney Parklands are expected to become the largest urban parklands system in Australia and one of the largest in the world.

WESTERN SYDNEY: TRADIES PARADISE OF HOMES AND JOBS

- Western Sydney is tipped to be the big winner under the State's new planning system with thousands of jobs and new housing boosting the construction sector.

- It's estimated the new system will directly support an additional 6,000 jobs across NSW in the residential construction industry – with one-third of those jobs in Western Sydney.
- It was welcome news for Western Sydney plumbers, electricians, bricklayers, plasterers and carpenters.
- Independent analysis by the Centre for International Economics (CIE), a new planning system with less red tape, fewer delays, and growth planning would boost the NSW economy by \$2 to \$3 billion per year and boost employment.

ANZAC BRIDGE MAINTENANCE UPGRADE COMPLETE

- The completion of the major ANZAC Bridge maintenance upgrade has been celebrated with a special commemoration to honour the heroes the structure is named after.
- NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell was joined by RSL President Don Rowe and returned services guests unveil a set of refreshed commemorative plaques to honour the memory of soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.
- The upgrade work included maintenance of the bridge's cables to reduce weather induced vibration, improved pedestrian safety and better access to ensure this vital piece of infrastructure continues to operate successfully for the decades to come.
- This \$67 million investment is another demonstration of the NSW Government's commitment to renovating the State's infrastructure. The ANZAC Bridge will service drivers heading into the city from WestConnex.

NEW ON-WATER PATROLS TO TACKLE BOATING SAFETY

- A trial of coordinated on-water patrols between Roads & Maritime Services, NSW Department of Primary Industries and the NSW Police Force is aiming to help to prevent boating accidents and improving safety.
- The six-month trial of this new compliance program is running during the entire 2013-14 boating season and will cover Botany Bay, Port Hacking and the Georges River.
- Under this coordinated approach, officers from any of the three agencies will now be empowered to enforce important boating safety measures including the wearing of lifejackets.
- Over the past decade, nine out of every 10 people who drown when boating in NSW were not wearing a lifejacket and more often than not they were in a small vessel.

SPELLING BEE FINALISTS CONGRATULATED

- C-O-N-G-R-A-T-U-L-A-T-I-O-N-S to 87 of the State's best spellers who took part in the Premier's Spelling Bee State Finals in Sydney.
- More than 131,000 students took part in the competition this year vying to be named Junior and Senior Spelling Bee State Champions.

- The competition has come a long way since its first year in 2004 when 800 students took part and NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell is looking forward to many more schools coming on board in 2014.
- The NSW Government is committed to improving public education. We've employed an additional 500 full-time-equivalent teachers since the election and funded the construction of 15 new or relocated schools, as well as major upgrades of 30 others.

TIMEBANKING VOLUNTEER PROGRAM EXPANDED

- The NSW Government's volunteering initiative – Timebanking – is being expanded after the success of an initial pilot in the Hunter and Central Coast region.
- Timebanking is based on a barter system allowing volunteers to exchange 'time credits' for time they volunteer, which they redeem at a later date for a service of personal value.
- Following the success of Timebanking in the Hunter and Central Coast, which attracted more than 3,600 members, 30 additional communities have been invited to come on board in 2014.
- To find out more about Timebanking visit www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au/volunteers/timebanking

HELPING COUNCILS PREPARE FOR FLOODING

- The NSW Government will provide \$3.5 million in grants to local councils to create flood plans, and reduce the risks and impacts of floods before they occur.
- The funding builds on the \$24 million allocated by the NSW Government last year for projects now being implemented by councils to protect the people of NSW against the devastation caused by flooding.
- Twenty-one councils will receive funding to assist 24 projects to plan for flooding and to build and maintain infrastructure to reduce the impacts on their area.
- Councils will also contribute their own funds to the projects – and in most cases the NSW Government will provide \$2 for every \$1 offered by councils.

HISTORIC VISIT TO BOURKE BY STATE'S TOP PUBLIC SERVANTS

- The heads of NSW Government departments and agencies have made their first group visit to a remote or remote community in NSW.
- Minister for Western NSW, Kevin Humphries, joined the group in Bourke, acting on the NSW Government's commitment to restore services and infrastructure to rural and remote communities.
- The visit followed a request from the Bourke Shire Council and allowed the state's top public servants to see first-hand the challenges rural and remote communities such as Bourke face.
- The visit gave the directors-general insight into how they can streamline and deliver services more effectively and efficiently for local residents.

SYDNEY STEPS UP TO THE PLATE

- NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell, Treasurer Mike Baird and Minister for Sport and Recreation Gabrielle Upton joined players and fans for the official Sydney Blue Sox Season Launch at the SCG.
- This year's baseball season is being eagerly anticipated ahead of the first ever Major League Baseball matches to be staged in Australia in March.
- Baseball fans from around the globe will have their eyes trained on the SCG when the Arizona Diamondbacks take on the LA Dodgers in March next year.
- These Major League Baseball matches will deliver a direct visitor impact of more than \$13 million for the local economy and expose Sydney to a massive worldwide television audience – as well as being a great boost for the sport locally.

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

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