

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 1 August 2014

HIGHEST HOUSING APPROVALS IN A DECADE

- NSW has recorded the highest housing approvals in a decade for the last financial year.
- More than 50,000 new homes were approved in 2013/14 showing the NSW Government's focus on housing supply and affordability is working.
- Average monthly NSW home approvals since the NSW Liberals & Nationals came to office is 3,481 - 31 per cent higher than the monthly average of the former Labor Government.
- A booming home building industry means more work for tradespeople and the businesses that supply them.

NEXT PHASE OF HISTORIC FLASHING LIGHTS ROLLOUT BEGINS

- The second phase of the NSW Government's historic school zone flashing lights rollout began this week, which will see every school receive a set of flashing lights by the end of next year.
- Phase two will see flashing lights installed outside at least 100 schools each month between now and December 2015, improving the safety for our children as they make their way to-and-from school.
- The \$32 million program will focus on local government areas to ensure it's cost effective.
- The first LGAs in the rollout are Ryde, Sutherland, Blacktown, City of Sydney, Willoughby, Tweed and Wollongong.

OPAL CARD POP-UP KIOSKS NOW AT 28 MAJOR TRAIN STATIONS

- Opal cards are now available at pop-up kiosks at 28 of Sydney's busiest train stations, as preparations begin to retire some paper tickets from 1 September.
- The kiosks, which span stations from Hornsby to Rockdale, Penrith and Wynyard, will allow customers to quickly and conveniently obtain an unregistered Opal card, joining more than 440,000 people already using Sydney's new electronic ticketing system.
- The pop-up kiosks come as preparations are made to retire a number of paper tickets from September. Retiring these paper tickets will allow the NSW Government to continue to modernise Sydney's transport network.

- Opal can now be used on all suburban and intercity trains, all Sydney Ferries services and more than 1700 buses. The bus rollout is continuing, and will be complete by the end of this year and Opal will be in place on light rail early in 2015.

WESTERN SYDNEY STATIONS UNDERGO \$150 MILLION UPGRADE

- The NSW Government has announced a \$150 million package to upgrade six busy Western Sydney train stations.
- Penrith, Pendle Hill and Blacktown stations will receive major upgrades, including new lifts and ramps, upgrades to the station concourses, new bus interchanges and pedestrian links. This is a huge boost for thousands of Western Sydney customers, especially seniors, people with a disability, and parents with prams.
- As part of the package, the NSW Government is also fast-tracking upgrades at Wentworth Falls, Wentworthville and Flemington stations.
- This multi-million dollar investment is on top of station upgrades and new commuter car parks already underway or completed in Western Sydney, as part of the NSW Government's \$770 million Transport Access Program.

COMMENCEMENT OF GOING HOME STAYING HOME

- The NSW Government has boosted services to tackle homelessness under its Going Home Staying Home reform package.
- The reforms took effect on 1 August, with 149 agreements with providers either locked in, or close to being finalised.
- Going Home Staying Home will boost funding on homelessness by 9 per cent, and place greater emphasis on early intervention and addressing homelessness in regional and suburban areas.
- The “no wrong door” philosophy of the reforms is designed to make access easier and more logical for clients, with a single phone number – 1800 152 152 – providing access to the right services.

NSW ENTERS THE DIGITAL AGE WITH ePLANNING

- A range of online planning tools are being developed to allow homeowners and businesses better navigate and access the NSW planning system, bringing the system into the digital age.
- The NSW Government has invested in delivering a range of ePlanning tools and services over a two year period, making the planning system simpler, cheaper, faster and more convenient.
- The new ePlanning tools include a ‘Planning Viewer’ to show planning rules that apply to properties, ‘Interactive Buildings’ that will display interactive 3D models, and ‘Local Insights’ that will show planning statistics and projections.
- The first release of these versions of the ePlanning tools can be accessed at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/eplanning.

PREMIER LAUNCHES EDUCATION WEEK 2014

- Education Week 2014 has been an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the achievements of NSW public schools, their students, staff and school communities.
- The Premier and Education Minister launched this year's Education Week at Campbelltown Performing Arts High School.
- This year's celebrations included notable public school alumni reflecting on their own public school education, including former Prime Minister John Howard, television presenter Chris Bath, and former High Court judge Michael Kirby.
- The NSW Government is committed to boosting public education by responding to individual circumstances and breaking down the centralised, one-size-fits-all model that doesn't serve modern learners.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST OPEN FOR 2015 GALLIPOLI SCHOOL TOUR

- High school students will be given a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to represent NSW at the 2015 Gallipoli Dawn Service, marking the 100th anniversary of the landing of the first Anzacs.
- The NSW Government will offer 100 students in years 10, 11, and 12 the opportunity to travel to Turkey to be part of the centenary commemorations.
- Government, independent, and Catholic high schools are encouraged to enter a ballot that will see 25 successful schools eligible to nominate students for the tour.
- Students and supervising teachers will leave for Turkey in April 2015, and will attend the Centenary of Anzac Dawn Service at Gallipoli.
- Further details can be found on the NSW Centenary of Anzac website: <http://veterans.nsw.gov.au/centenary/gallipoli-2015-school-tour/>.

BEDS GO ELECTRIC AT WESTMEAD HOSPITAL

- The replacement of manual beds at Westmead Hospital – some of which are up to 35 years old - is making a huge difference to our hard working nurses and patients.
- The NSW Government provided \$260,000 to purchase 64 beds as part of an ongoing bed replacement program at Westmead Hospital.
- The new electric beds will be installed in high dependency and aged care wards, and will assist staff by reducing the risk of injury from manually adjusting beds.
- They also give patients greater independence while raising and lowering their beds, which is particularly important to older patients, reducing the risk of falls.

HELPING WOMEN BREAK THE PRISON CYCLE

- The NSW Government has announced funding for a mentoring program to help women who have been in prison get on track and break the cycle of re-offending.
- The partnership with the Women in Prison Advocacy Network will provide mentoring services over the next 18 months to at least 50 women who are due for release from custody, or who have recently been released.

- Many women who have been in prison have children, and this program helps them with their family responsibilities– helping prevent future generations from continuing the same pattern of criminal behaviour.
- The program is run by a group of women including ex-prisoners, lawyers, academics and women from the broader community.

SYDNEY COUNCILS TO SIGN HISTORIC AGREEMENT WITH SYDNEY WATER

- An historic agreement between councils and Sydney Water is expected to reduce the time taken to repair roads and footpaths dug up for water and sewerage works.
- The leaders of 42 Sydney councils this week signed a landmark memorandum of understanding with Sydney Water.
- The MOU commits councils and Sydney Water to agreed timeframes, quality specifications and ongoing management practices for road and footpath restoration.
- The agreement will increase accountability and reduce red tape around footpath repairs, achieving a better outcome for NSW ratepayers and taxpayers.

COMPOSTING TO TURN PYRMONT BRIDGE GREEN

- Darling Harbour will showcase a world-first experiment in environmentally sustainable design, with a three-dimensional garden set to temporarily transform Pyrmont Bridge from late October.
- The 'Amaze' project will see more than one tonne of organic waste diverted from landfill each day and turned into compost that will nourish an amazing trellis garden.
- Starting from August, Darling Harbour restaurants and attractions will recycle their organic waste into compost.
- It's the first time in Australia, and possibly the world, that a major tourism precinct has collaborated on a composting program of this scale.

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