

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 9 May 2014

\$2.8 BILLION INVESTMENT IN NEW INTERCITY TRAINS

- The NSW Government will invest \$2.8 billion in a new state-of-the-art fleet of intercity trains, giving long-distance customers a more comfortable ride and for the first time making all state trains air-conditioned.
- Around 65 new state-of-the-art intercity trains, including about 520 brand new carriages, will carry passengers to the Central Coast, Newcastle, the Blue Mountains, and the Illawarra. Sydney customers will also benefit from this significant investment, as the new trains will stop at many busy Sydney interchanges such as Central and Strathfield.
- In addition, the Oscar intercity fleet - currently operating to outer metropolitan areas – will be reallocated to Sydney suburban services, meaning every train across the state will be air-conditioned.
- This is a major investment in a brand new train fleet for NSW and shows how hard the NSW Government is working to improve services for the tens of thousands of customers commuting every day.

BLUE MOUNTAINS BUSHFIRE GRANTS

- The NSW Government is calling on organisations to design innovative projects that will help the Blue Mountains community recover after the devastating 2013 October bushfires, following the launch of a \$970,000 Blue Mountains Bushfire Grants Program.
- The program is part of the \$1.8-million recovery package for the Blue Mountains community and is in addition to the \$11.4 million of assistance already provided by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments.
- The Blue Mountains community has demonstrated amazing resilience in the post bushfire period and these targeted funds will make a real difference in the community.
- Round one of the two-stage grants program will specifically fund social and economic recovery-focused projects or a combination of both. Round two funding will be reserved for social recovery projects which may require further time to develop.

CABINET APPOINTMENTS

- NSW Premier Mike Baird announced the appointment of Stuart Ayres as Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the promotion of Matthew Mason-Cox to the NSW Cabinet team.
- Andrew Constance will take on additional responsibility with the portfolio of Industrial Relations and Rob Stokes will take on Minister for the Central Coast, while Duncan Gay will take on the role of Government Leader of the NSW Legislative Council.
- The new team of Parliamentary Secretaries includes: David Elliott, who becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for Youth, Homelessness and the Centenary of ANZAC; Leslie Williams, who becomes Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy; John Barilaro, who becomes Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Regional Development; Matt Kean, who becomes Parliamentary Secretary for Communities; Catherine Cusack, MLC, who becomes Parliamentary Secretary for Tertiary Education and Skills.
- Another change in the Parliamentary Secretaries team include the appointment of Mark Speakman to the role of Parliamentary Secretary for Treasury.

TOUGHER PENALTIES FOR STRANGULATION

- A new offence of strangulation will make it easier to prosecute violent offenders and increase the maximum penalty to 10 years in prison, under legislation introduced to Parliament this week.
- Currently 70 per cent of strangulation cases in a domestic violence context are dealt with as common assault, attracting a maximum penalty of only two years imprisonment.
- The new offence of strangulation does away with the need to prove the offender choked the victim while intending to commit another offence, such as sexual assault, murder or robbery.
- The NSW Government has responded to concerns from the Director of Public Prosecutions that the current offence of strangulation is inadequate and doesn't fully reflect its serious nature.

NSW CONTINUES TO LEAD THE NATION ON JOBS GROWTH

- NSW continues to have the second lowest unemployment rate in the nation, adding 7,800 jobs in April.
- The ABS figures show the state unemployment rate increased slightly from a revised 5.2 per cent to 5.4 per cent, but remains well below the national average of 5.8 per cent.
- National economic uncertainty means our job figures remain vulnerable to fluctuations, however we are encouraged to see NSW added 7,800 jobs in April – more than half of the new jobs created nationally.
- NSW continues to outperform all the states with the highest number of jobs created in the nation since the NSW Liberals & Nationals came to office, with 137,400 additional jobs.

\$100 MILLION WYNYARD STATION UPGRADE TO BEGIN

- The NSW Government will invest \$100 million in an upgrade of Wynyard Station, including an overhaul of the concourse and ticket area to make it easier for customers to move in and around the station.
- The work includes an upgrade to the CBD station's concourse and platforms, with a less cluttered concourse and wider ticket gate area making it easier for customers to enter, exit and move around the station.
- The NSW Government is determined to make public transport as simple and comfortable as possible for customers to encourage others out of their cars and onto trains, buses, ferries and light rail.
- Wynyard Station is also the gateway to Barangaroo and will play a key part in the movements of thousands more customers every peak period.

GIVING FAMILIES A GREATER VOICE IN SENTENCING

- New legislation will make it possible for family members of homicide victims to have their Victim Impact Statements considered in sentencing.
- Statements by victims of crime are already considered in cases like sexual or physical assault, but until now statements from surviving family members cannot be taken into account by a judge in sentencing for matters involving unlawful death in NSW.
- Some victim support groups have told us some family members want their statement considered in sentencing as an acknowledgment that their perspective matters.
- No family will be forced to have its statement considered and therefore be subject to strict legal rules and scrutiny - the current arrangement allowing them to address the court and the offender will continue.

STATION REFRESH AT 19 MAJOR TRANSPORT HUBS UNDERWAY

- The revitalisation of 19 key stations has been announced, as part of a \$22 million station refresh program.
- Train stations right across Sydney have been ignored for decades, and had been left in ruins by the former Labor government. The refresh program will include a deep clean, improved station security and less clutter on platforms.
- The NSW Government is working hard to clean up some of the busiest stations on the network, and customers will begin to see clean, modern looking facilities, in line with the world-class service we are aiming to provide on our railways.
- The 19 key stations undergoing the refresh program include Asquith, Berala, Blacktown, Bondi Junction, Burwood, Caringbah, Carramar, Chester Hill, Granville, Gymea, Hurstville, Kogarah, Lidcombe, Martin Place, Parramatta, Penrith, Redfern, St Leonards and Strathfield.

BARANGAROO HUB TO TRANSFORM SYDNEY FERRY SERVICES

- A new ferry hub will be constructed at Barangaroo, with tenders now open to start planning, and the wharf to be ready for customers in 2016.
- The NSW Government has committed to building a new ferry wharf and interchange hub at Barangaroo as part of Sydney's Ferry Future – a blueprint to expand the ferry network over the next 20 years.
- A tender has been released for the preparation of an environmental assessment. Preliminary site investigations for the project will also begin in the coming months and community consultation will be carried out later this year.
- The southern end of the Barangaroo development is expected to cater for 11,000 workers by the end of next year, increasing to around 19,000 by late 2016. Full occupation of Barangaroo south will be by August 2019 with 23,000 workers.
- A new ferry hub at Barangaroo will provide room for additional ferry services from the Parramatta River to Darling Harbour and Barangaroo, as well as direct access to and from the Eastern Suburbs and lower North Shore.

*Follow the NSW Government on Twitter @MikeBairdMP and Facebook
www.facebook.com/mikebairdMP*