

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 12 December 2014

SCHOOLS ACCOUNTABLE FOR ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

- NSW public schools will implement a new framework in 2015, ensuring schools can clearly identify, implement and monitor strategies to deliver educational excellence.
- The new School Excellence Framework contains a description of what constitutes high-quality education in three areas: how children learn, how teachers teach and how schools are led.
- The Framework has clear statements of excellence for schools to aim for in each of these three areas, and will help NSW public schools show how they are using additional funding to improve student outcomes.
- School plans will identify three key strategic directions that will be monitored using milestones determined by the schools to assist them in tracking and sharing progress. Schools will report to their communities on their progress in their annual school report.

RECORD POLICE NUMBERS

- NSW Police Force numbers are now at record highs. An additional 89 authorised strength positions were added to the NSW Police Force this month, taking the total authorised strength to 16,485.
- Since 2011, the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government has delivered an additional 679 police officer positions – and under this Government, 2,966 new probationary constables have attested from the NSW Police Academy in Goulburn.
- Minister for Police and Emergency Services Stuart Ayres congratulated 313 members of “Class 323” who attested from the academy this week.
- The probationary officers, consisting of 222 male and 91 female recruits ranging from 20 to 55 years, will now begin their careers right across NSW.

OPAL TOP-UP MACHINES ON THE WAY

- Opal top-up machines will be rolled out to train stations, ferry wharves and light rail stops from early 2015, as the number of Opal cards issued reaches 1.5 million.
- Testing will begin this week before the first machines start appearing on stations in Western Sydney and the CBD early next year.

- Almost 350 machines will be rolled out over the next 12 months, providing coverage for around 99 per cent of customers.
- The first 100 machines to roll out will allow customers to top-up on the spot with a debit or credit card, the second type will include disposable tickets and the third will also accept cash.

WESTERN SYDNEY JOBS BOOM

- NSW Premier and Minister for Western Sydney Mike Baird turned the first sod on two major projects in Western Sydney that will generate hundreds of additional jobs for the booming region.
- A new \$32 million Lindt chocolate factory, office and warehouse will be built at Marsden Park creating 150 jobs during construction, and 325 full time jobs once completed.
- The Premier also turned the first sod at Masters' Penrith store - one of four new outlets expected to create over 2,000 jobs across Western Sydney.
- More companies are calling Western Sydney home because of the skills of its workforce and the NSW Government's delivery of vital infrastructure.

CHRISTMAS TRADING HOURS EXTENDED

- The NSW Government is taking some of the stress out of Christmas by extending shopping hours to give local retailers a boost during the seasonal shopping period.
- Existing shops in business zones have been allowed to open 24-hours-a-day in the fortnight leading up to Christmas, without requiring specific planning approval for additional trading hours.
- This is a first for NSW and is a great opportunity for retailers, small businesses and local shopping centres to offer flexibility to their customers by extending their trading hours during this busy time of year.
- For more information on the Exempt and Complying Development SEPP visit: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/exemptandcomplying or contact your local Council.

EASIER REGO NOW IN EFFECT

- The NSW Government is making the process of renewing vehicle registrations easier for motorists.
- From this week, obtaining a vehicle safety inspection report or pink slip will be much easier when their validity is extended from six weeks to six months.
- The change means motorists have more flexibility to choose a convenient time for their annual safety inspection.
- Unnecessary registration renewal steps for pensioners have been removed and replaced with an automatic renewal system so eligible pensioners don't need to take action to renew their registrations.

MOODY'S REAFFIRMS NSW TRIPLE-A

- Ratings agency Moody's has reaffirmed the State's triple-A credit rating in a clear endorsement of the NSW Government's strong economic and financial management.
- The announcement means NSW continues to hold the highest possible credit rating from both Standard and Poor's and Moody's.
- This is a clear endorsement of the economic and fiscal strategy implemented under the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government over the past three and a half years.

NEW WALLERAWANG FIRE STATION COMPLETED

- The NSW Government is continuing to invest in emergency services infrastructure, with the completion of the new \$1.02 million Wallerawang Fire Station.
- The old station building no longer met the needs of a modern firefighting service so it was demolished and a new station was built in its place.
- The new station has a larger double engine bay and better staff accommodation, including locker rooms, training and office facilities, and improved equipment storage for uniforms and breathing apparatus.
- Meanwhile, after a long selection process and a gruelling 13 week course, 24 recruit firefighters have been welcomed into the ranks of Fire & Rescue NSW.

NEW ELECTRONIC MONITORING OF OFFENDERS

- A new generation of anklets and tracking software has been unveiled as part of a new electronic monitoring system of offenders in NSW.
- The new system supports tough new laws that have more than doubled prison sentences for offenders who breach an Extended Supervision Order.
- The anklet is five times stronger than previous anklets and the new GPS equipment contains steel bands and Kevlar, which is used in bullet-proof vests.
- When combined with the close supervision and management by our Community Corrections officers, these measures will reduce risks associated with reoffending.

\$80M KEMPSEY HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT MILESTONE

- A major milestone has been reached in the \$80.9 million redevelopment of Kempsey Hospital, with construction reaching its highest point on the three-storey main hospital building.
- To mark the milestone, a pencil pine tree was lifted onto the roof of the structure - approximately 22 metres above ground.
- Once completed, the Kempsey Hospital redevelopment will include a new and expanded emergency department, a new emergency medical unit and an integrated community care centre.

- The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government has invested almost \$5 billion in its first term to rebuild hospitals right across the State.

INCREASING PENALTIES FOR FARM TRESPASS

- New measures have been announced to better protect NSW farms from trespass and surveillance activities.
- Illegal entry onto farms presents a major biosecurity risk to the State's \$12 billion primary industries sector.
- The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government has been working with farmers, NSW Police and RSPCA NSW to develop a comprehensive cross-agency policy to address the issue of illegal entry onto farms.
- NSW proudly maintains some of the strictest biosecurity and animal welfare measures of anywhere in the world. The new policy will put in place guidelines and penalties to better protect farmers and the welfare of animals.

CRONULLA WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADE COMPLETE

- Works undertaken as part of the NSW Government's \$46 million investment into the Cronulla Wastewater Treatment Plant are now complete.
- The upgrade will significantly reduce the risk of odours impacting on the surrounding community and improve the reliability and extend the economic life of the existing infrastructure at the plant.
- As part of the works, a new upgraded cogeneration plant now supplies up to 80 per cent of the plant's energy requirements.
- The NSW Government has invested more than \$1.8 billion in Sydney Water's infrastructure network since coming into government in March 2011.

LIVE CHAT SUPPORT ROLLED OUT FOR SENIORS

- Service NSW has begun trialling live chat to help customers carry out their online transactions with government, starting with Seniors Card transactions.
- The live chat gives people access to real time support from a real person when they are trying to complete an online transaction.
- It allows people to communicate instantly and be guided while online by customer service representatives who can troubleshoot and help navigate the way through a Seniors Card transaction.
- The live chat facility is another step by Service NSW to bring government transactions into the digital age and streamline customer services.

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