

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 28 March 2014

DELIVERED: LIGHT RAIL SERVICES BEGIN ON INNER WEST EXTENSION

- The Inner West Light Rail extension has opened to passengers, delivering on the NSW Government's commitment to build new major public transport projects for customers.
- The light rail extension includes nine new stations from Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill, 5.6km of new track and four new-look light rail vehicles. Peak services run every 10 minutes between 7am – 10am and 3pm – 6pm, and every 15 minutes in the off peak period.
- The benefits of this project are broader than for just those in the Inner West. Getting cars off the road is a benefit for everyone commuting into the city from Western Sydney.
- The Inner West now has more transport options than ever before, with 1,300 regular bus services each morning, and 15 minute frequencies on the Inner West train line provided by the new train timetable.

OPAL NOW ON ALL SYDNEY TRAINS

- Customers can now use their Opal card to travel anywhere on the Sydney Trains network as it goes live at an extra 70 stations.
- This marks a milestone for commuters across Sydney, with Opal providing cheaper fares, modernising the way people use public transport and reducing Monday morning ticket queues.
- By Friday 11 April, Opal will be available across the entire NSW TrainLink network, including the Illawarra, Southern Highlands, Blue Mountains, Newcastle and the Hunter.
- Three years since coming to government, we have completed the rollout of Opal electronic ticketing on the entire Sydney Trains network, after it was promised, but never delivered by the former government for the 2000 Olympics.

HOSPITAL BUILDING BOOM UNDERWAY IN NSW

- A hospital building boom is underway in NSW, supporting more than 25,000 construction-related jobs, as part of the NSW Liberal & Nationals Government's almost \$5 billion commitment to upgrading hospital infrastructure.
- Some of the jobs are located at the State's largest hospital construction project – the \$324 million Stage 1 redevelopment of Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital.

- The Blacktown campus includes a new seven-storey clinical services building, which includes comprehensive care centres for cancer, cardiac, respiratory and aged care, a new multi-storey car park for 600 cars, and a sub-acute mental health facility.
- The massive health capital works program will support more than 10,000 jobs directly associated with the construction of hospitals/health care facilities, and more than 15,000 indirect jobs.

NW RAIL LINK TUNNEL BORING MACHINE IN THE GROUND BY OCTOBER

- The first North West Rail Link tunnel boring machine will be in the ground before the end of October – ahead of our end of year commitment.
- We're getting on with the job of building the biggest public transport project in the country and a critical piece of infrastructure that will change the way of life for the people of Sydney's North West.
- The North West Rail Link is a crucial part of the NSW Government's record \$60 billion infrastructure budget, which includes the South West Rail Link, WestConnex upgrading the M4 and M5, and NorthConnex linking the M1 and M2.
- The tunnelling phase of construction will support around 900 jobs – with a major recruitment drive now underway. More detail is available via the jobs section of the North West Rail Link website: www.northwestrail.com.au

CSG EXPLORATION LICENCE APPLICATIONS FROZEN

- The NSW Government has announced a freeze on the processing of new Petroleum Exploration Licence Applications (PELAs), required for a proponent to explore for Coal Seam Gas, and an audit of existing Petroleum Exploration Licences (PELs).
- The processing of new PELAs will be frozen until 26 September 2014 as it puts in place a more comprehensive application process.
- In addition to the freeze PEL application fees will be raised from \$50,000 from just \$1,000, effectively immediately.
- We want an application process that sends a clear message that the Liberals & Nationals Government will only accept best practice standards.

TARGETING CSG NON-COMPLIANCE

- The NSW Government is targeting operators that have not met the conditions of their coal seam gas exploration licences and proponents that have submitted deficient applications.
- Minister for Resources and Energy Anthony Roberts has refused five Petroleum Exploration Licence Applications from one company, and issued a 'Show Cause' notice to another to address why its licences shouldn't be cancelled.
- The NSW Government already has the toughest CSG regulations in the country and these measures send a strong message that we take compliance with licence conditions seriously.

- The Minister has also welcomed a landmark agreement on land access for CSG operations in NSW between gas companies Santos and AGL and landholder representatives NSW Farmers, Cotton Australia and the NSW Irrigators Council.
- The agreed principles relate to CSG projects in NSW and specifically cover access to private agricultural landholder's property for CSG exploration and production drilling operations.

DRESS CODE A FIRST FOR TEACHERS

- The first-ever explicit Dress Code for more than 70,000 NSW public school teachers has been released by the NSW Government.
- While the vast majority of teachers dress professionally, it is important for the Department of Education and Communities to detail the dress standards it expects staff to follow.
- Wearing appropriate dress helps teachers maintain respect and credibility with students, parents and the broader community.
- Principals have asked for greater clarity about what is acceptable. Teachers should not come to school wearing t-shirts, rubber thongs or clothes displaying alcohol advertising and we have made this clear in the Dress Code.

CONGESTION-BUSTING STRATEGY STARTS THIS WEEKEND

- Motorists on Sydney's Victoria Road will notice a smoother run this weekend with the beginning of weekend clearways at Rozelle between The Crescent and Iron Cove Bridge.
- It's part of the NSW Government's Sydney Clearways Strategy to tackle weekend congestion on our roads, which in many areas is as bad, and if not worse, than peak hour traffic.
- Following consultation with Victoria Road businesses and residents, the weekend clearway will be introduced on weekends from 8am to 8pm with alternative parking available via Ellen Street.
- Information on other proposed priority clearway sites can be viewed at www.rms.nsw.gov.au/clearways.

MAJOR EVENTS A \$1 BILLION BOOM FOR NSW

- Sydney's successful hosting of the Major League Baseball Opening Series has confirmed NSW's revival as the major events capital of Australia.
- Since coming to office we have committed to growing the economy through major events because of the visitors they bring to NSW, supporting tens of thousands of jobs in our tourism and hospitality sectors across Sydney and the regions.
- The baseball alone saw more than 25,000 visitors to Sydney from interstate and overseas, which is great news for our hotels, pubs, cafes and restaurants.
- In the past three years we've secured 89 major events in a total of 224 events for NSW, delivering more than \$1.3 billion in additional visitor spending to the NSW economy.

COURTS TO OPEN DOORS TO CAMERAS

- The NSW Government is proposing new legislation to encourage greater media access to broadcast sentencing proceedings in criminal trials.
- Social media channels such as Twitter have already helped to demystify the court process and we are taking the next step towards making television access the norm, rather than the exception, for sentencing in criminal trials.
- Exceptions would be clearly defined. For example, broadcasting would be inappropriate when filming would reveal the identity of jurors, protected witnesses or victims, or put the safety and security of someone at risk.
- This measure will open courts to greater scrutiny, enhance the public understanding of the criminal justice system, and increase the transparency of the decision making.

REVITALISING INLAND TOURISM

- The NSW Government has provided Inland NSW Tourism with more than \$800,000 over two years to market regional NSW as one of the State's premier tourism destinations.
- The funding will help revitalise many regional communities currently experiencing drought conditions by encouraging more visitors to explore the region.
- The Regional Visitor Economy Fund has provided the grant to fund a marketing campaign to promote the best the region has to offer, including food, wine, arts and culture.
- The NSW Government is committed to promoting regional NSW to visitors. Tourism in regional NSW was worth more than \$13.7 billion in visitor expenditure at year end September 2013, an 11 per cent increase on the previous year.

IT'S TIME TO BE WINTER WISE

- Residents of NSW are being asked to prepare for the influenza season and *Be Winter Wise* before the full force of the season hits.
- While anyone can get the flu and everyone should protect themselves against it, NSW Health's *Be Winter Wise* campaign is focusing on pregnant women, the elderly and people with chronic medical conditions.
- People should not be complacent when it comes to the dangers of the flu. In susceptible people, flu symptoms can quickly progress to become life threatening.
- Our hospitals are equipped and preparing to manage the increased case load that comes during the winter months, but we are urging people to be aware of how they can stay well during the influenza season and stay out of hospital.

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