

NSW GOVERNMENT WEEKLY UPDATE – 30 May 2014

NEW LAWS TO PROTECT PROPERTY FROM BUSHFIRES

- Residents will be given additional powers to protect their homes from bushfires, with new laws introduced into NSW Parliament this week to make it easier to clear trees and vegetation from around a property.
- Under the proposed new laws, people with homes in a bushfire zone will be able to clear trees within 10 metres of their house. They will also be able to clear shrubs and other vegetation, except for trees, within 50 metres of their home.
- The new laws will also apply to other facilities deemed high risk, such as schools, child care centres and hospitals in designated zones.
- The new laws put people before trees – ensuring we cut green and red tape for residents whose homes are located in designated areas close to bushland.

TRANSFORMING DARLING HARBOUR

- Construction has begun at Sydney's new convention, exhibition and entertainment precinct - the International Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney – part of the \$2.5 billion redevelopment of Darling Harbour that will create thousands of jobs.
- Once completed, the new world-class facilities will ensure Sydney remains the first choice in Australia and the Asia Pacific for the lucrative business events industry.
- In total, the Darling Harbour Live redevelopment project will provide 3,700 jobs during construction and a further 4,000 jobs on completion.
- The transformation of Darling Harbour alone will generate an estimated \$5 billion to the NSW economy during the next 25 years.

EXPERT PANEL TO DRIVE DONATIONS REFORM

- Premier Mike Baird has announced an independent expert panel, led by respected businesswoman and senior public servant Kerry Schott, to investigate and recommend further reforms to NSW election funding laws.
- The three-member panel will also include former Labor Deputy Premier John Watkins and former Liberal Shadow Attorney General Andrew Tink, and will report back by 31 December on options for long term reform of political donations.
- The options to be looked at include whether full public funding of State election campaigns is feasible and in the public interest, and if not, what other models should be recommended.

- Mr Baird says he's determined to restore public trust in NSW politics, and the NSW Government will take whatever steps are necessary to increase transparency and accountability

LATEST MEASURES TO CURB ALCOHOL-FUELLED VIOLENCE

- Further measures have been announced to make streets and licenced venues safer in the Sydney CBD.
- Under the new plan of management, key drink restrictions apply after midnight, RSA training for bar staff will be updated, licensees are required to maintain round-the-clock incident registers, and outlaw motorcycle gang colours are banned.
- High visibility policing continues across the CBD and pre-paid taxis and taxi marshals will be rolled-out at seven CBD taxi ranks.
- The measures build on initiatives already in place, including 1.30am lockouts and 3am alcohol service stoppages, banning orders for troublemakers, RSA competency card suspensions for irresponsible bar staff, and the Three Strikes and Violent Venues schemes.

SMOKING BANNED AT SPORTING EVENTS IN NSW

- Smoking is now banned in all outdoor spectator areas of sports grounds during organised sports, protecting everyone from harmful second-hand smoke.
- The smoking ban applies to organised sporting events of all sizes, and a \$300 on-the-spot fine may apply for anyone in breach of the law.
- The NSW Health campaign aims to create smoke-free outdoor areas to make smoking less visible to children and young people.
- To learn more, visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/smokefree or contact the Tobacco Information Line on 1800 357 412.

VIVID SYDNEY SHINES WITH RECORD OPENING WEEKEND

- Vivid Sydney is breaking previous records, with more than 270,000 visitors attending the opening weekend– up an impressive 170 per cent on last year.
- Last year, more than 800,000 attended Vivid Sydney throughout the duration of the festival, which contributed over \$20 million in new money to NSW.
- With crowds to Vivid Sydney building on weekends, families should consider visiting early in the week, in the early evening, with installations lighting up from 5.30pm.
- Visitors are reminded to catch the 3,500 extra public transport services scheduled for the festival, and plan their trip by visiting, www.vividsydney.com.au/transport.

TRANSPORT OFFICERS ISSUE 90,000 FINES IN FIRST YEAR

- NSW Government Transport Officers have handed out more than 90,000 infringement notices to fare evaders in their first year of operations.

- Transport Officers patrolling the public transport network are required to check tickets to reduce fare evasion, and complement the Police Transport Command that took over public transport security in 2012.
- Officer numbers have been increased in recent months to the full strength team of 150. The team has reduced the number of overall concession ticket infringements handed out from 78 per cent in August of last year, to 55 per cent this March.
- All officers are now in possession of handheld smart devices, which check customers are travelling on valid tickets and can send infringement notices automatically by post, meaning fewer administrative errors and more time spent on the front-line.

STRENGTHENING WATER RIGHTS ACROSS NSW

- A new Bill has been introduced into NSW Parliament that overhauls water management in NSW and restores water property rights to irrigators.
- The *Water Management Amendment Bill 2014* provides greater security for people holding supplementary water licences and floodplain harvesting licences.
- The proposed changes lay the foundation for best-practice water management and end the ability for supplementary water licences to be cancelled without any compensation being provided to licence holders.
- The NSW Government has introduced the Bill in an attempt to reduce red tape and encourage business and industry to invest, innovate and grow.

TOUGHEST PENALTIES IN AUSTRALIA FOR POLLUTERS

- The NSW Government has announced a range of measures to strengthen the state's environment watchdog, including a proposed ten-fold increase in penalties for companies who breach environment protection licenses.
- The changes will provide the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) with the toughest regulatory powers in Australia, to be used against industries that pose the greatest risk to communities.
- The proposed changes include increasing fines for the ten most serious environmental offences from \$1500 to \$15,000 for a corporation, and from \$750 up to \$7,500 for an individual.
- The changes will shift the balance of power back in favour of the regulator rather than the polluter, allowing the EPA to operate more effectively, while better reflecting community expectations around environmental crimes.

EXTRA SUPPORT FOR MINING COMMUNITIES

- Three additional Local Government Areas (LGAs) have been included in the Resources for Regions program, which assists communities that experience added pressure on their local infrastructure as a result of mining activity.
- The additional support takes the total number of communities supported by Resources for Regions from eight to 11.

- For the first time, Broken Hill, Cessnock Maitland LGAs will be eligible for support under the 2014-15 program, joining Cobar, Lithgow, Mid-Western, Muswellbrook, Narrabri, Newcastle, Singleton and Wollongong.
- Over the four years of Resources for Regions, the program will provide \$160 million to communities experiencing extra pressure on their infrastructure – including schools, hospitals, roads and housing – as result of mining.

NEW OFFSHORE ARTIFICIAL REEFS FOR SYDNEY

- Two new offshore artificial reefs will be constructed off the coast of Sydney's Port Botany, providing a habitat for popular recreational fishing species such as snapper, kingfish and morwong.
- The two cluster reefs will cost about \$1.2 million each, and will be funded through the new Port Botany Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Program.
- The NSW Government has already installed a reef off Sydney's South Head, and two others are planned for the state's south and north coasts.
- This is an example of how the NSW Government is supporting more than one million recreational anglers in the state who generate \$1.6 billion in expenditure every year, and create more than 14,000 full-time jobs.

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